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YOUR SINCLAIR

May 1990 Number 53
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SAM Coupé New Column This Ish!!

BANZAI!!

STRAP ON YOUR SHOULDER PADS! IT'S THE...

DYNASTY WARS



HURRAH! IT'S THE COMPLETE *YS* GUIDE TO BEAT-'EM-UPS
They're all here!!

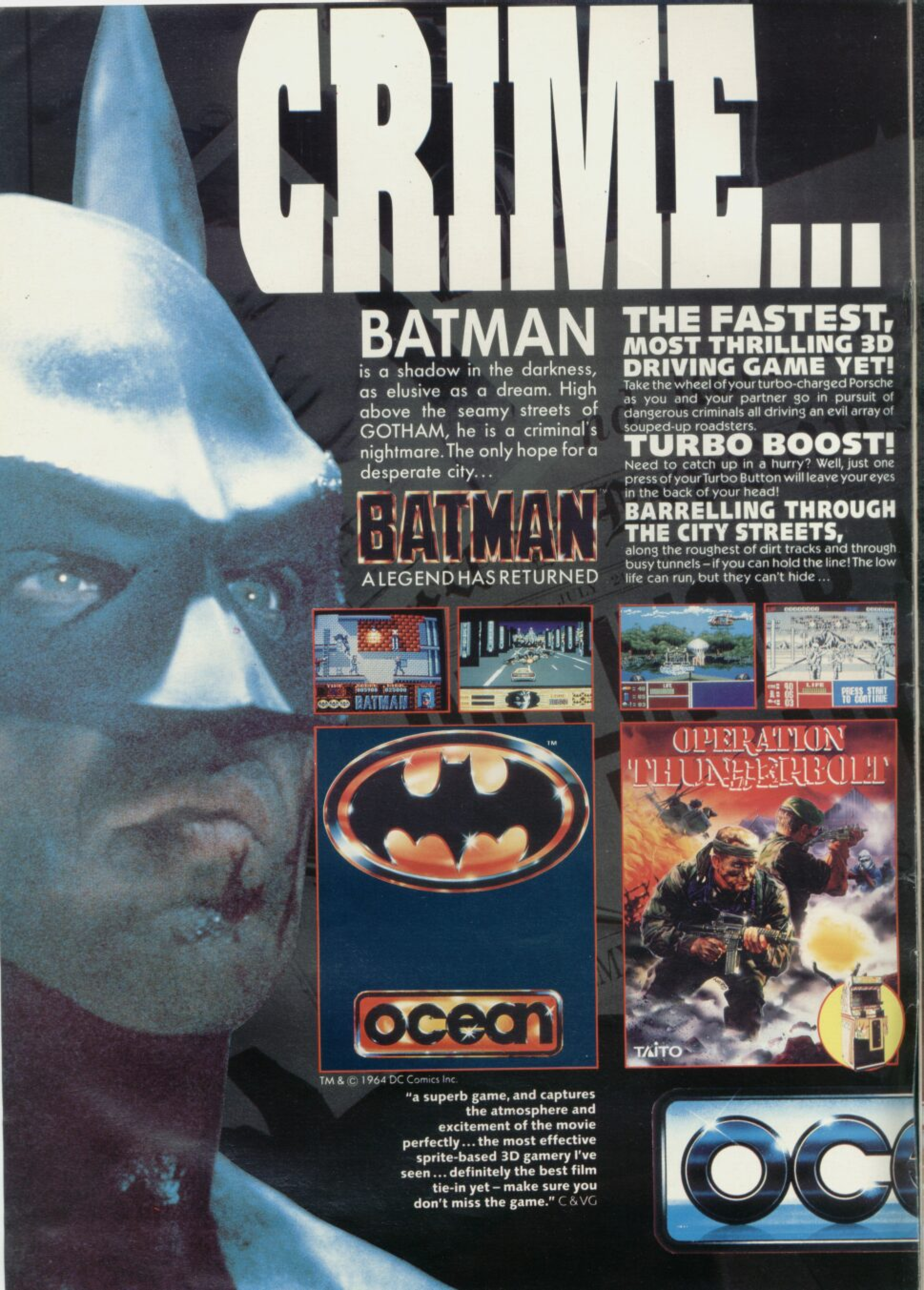
REVIEWED AND PREVIEWED
Switchblade
Ninja Spirit
Astro Marine Corps
Klax
Castle Master
Delta
Darius+
Crackdown
E-Motion
And More!!

SMASH TAPE No 30

What? No Smash Tape attached? You've been had then, matey! Why not ask the nice chappy/chappess behind the counter if they've been keeping it safe for you?

Critics Choice Of The Year!
***Dynasty Wars* Poster!**
And More!

It's Full Of Eastern Promise...



CRIME...
BATMAN
is a shadow in the darkness, as elusive as a dream. High above the seamy streets of GOTHAM, he is a criminal's nightmare. The only hope for a desperate city...
BATMAN
A LEGEND HAS RETURNED
THE FASTEST, MOST THRILLING 3D DRIVING GAME YET!
Take the wheel of your turbo-charged Porsche as you and your partner go in pursuit of dangerous criminals all driving an evil array of souped-up roadsters.
TURBO BOOST!
Need to catch up in a hurry? Well, just one press of your Turbo Button will leave your eyes in the back of your head!
BARRELLING THROUGH THE CITY STREETS,
along the roughest of dirt tracks and through busy tunnels – if you can hold the line! The low life can run, but they can't hide ...
BATMAN
PRESS START TO CONTINUE
ocean
OPERATION THUNDERBOLT
TAITO
TM & © 1964 DC Comics Inc.
"a superb game, and captures the atmosphere and excitement of the movie perfectly ... the most effective sprite-based 3D gamery I've seen ... definitely the best film tie-in yet – make sure you don't miss the game." C&VG


Pipe Mania!!
ADDICTION BEYOND BELIEF!!
C and VG Feb 1990 94%
Pipe Mania is "a classic puzzle arcade game that is so addictive, it should come with a Government Health Warning!"
Pipe Mania is a game of great ingenuity, simple in concept and friendishly challenging to play.
You'll need to act instinctively, but think strategically!
One wrong move, one brief hesitation or mis-placed pipe section, and you'll drown in a sea of slime!
ST Action
"Pipe Mania is a conceptually simple and cheeky game which is incredibly addictive"
Commodore User Screenstar
"Terrifically addictive... outlasts any arcade conversion"
AVAILABLE FOR
Commodore Amiga
IBM PC and Compatibles
Atari ST
Commodore 64 Cassette
Commodore 64 Disk
Spectrum Cassette
Spectrum Disk
Amstrad CPC Cassette
Amstrad CPC Disk
MSX
BBC Electron Cassette
BBC Disk
Apple Macintosh
Achimedes
Pipe Mania
Zero March 1990 92%
"Buy this game and you may never sleep again"
The Games Machine Star Player Award 83%
"A puzzle game of great ingenuity and addictivity, Pipe Mania is simple in concept, fiendishly challenging in play, and attractive to look at"
Zzap Sizzler
"Absolutely guaranteed to drive you round the bend"
Amiga Computing Excellence Award 95%
"A game with a game play that shines"
Game Players Award USA
"Best PC strategy game of 1989"
C+VG HIT!
AMIGA FORMAT GOLD
THE One FOR 16-BIT GAMES
ATARI ST AMIGA PC
machine STAR PLAYER
ZERO HERO
GAME Players GAME OF THE YEAR
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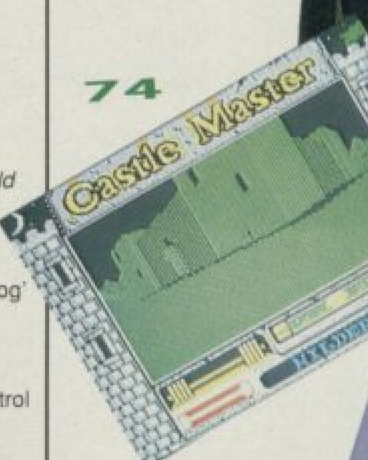
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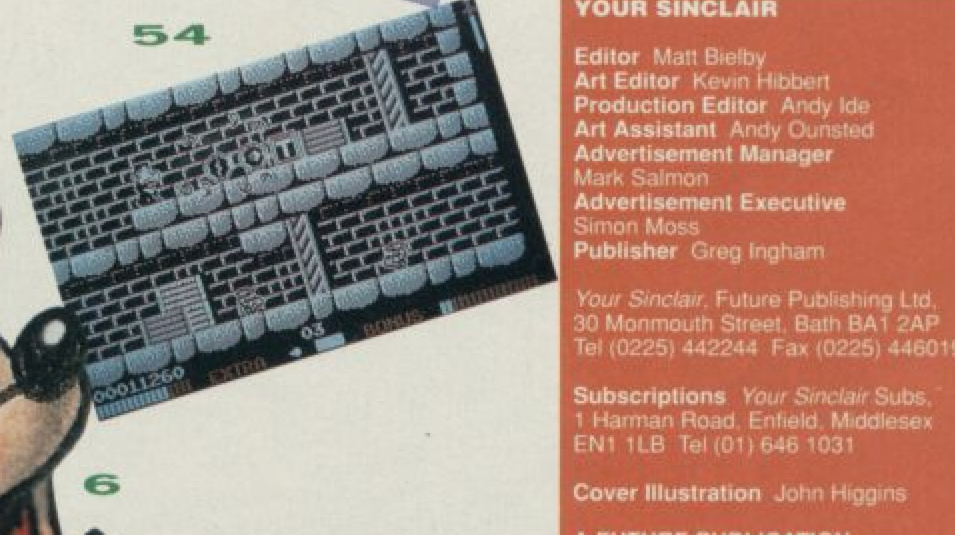


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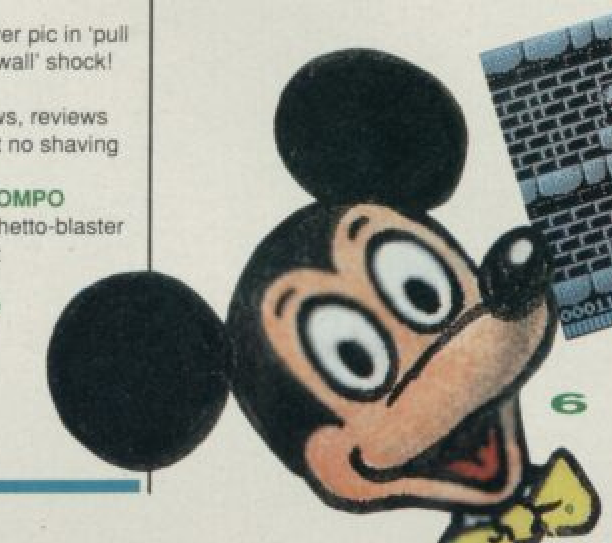




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YOUR SINCLAIR

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Cover Illustration John Higgins

A FUTURE PUBLICATION

As well you know, we receive letters from Spec-chums all over the world. So have we ever celebrated this fact? Er, well we're doing it now. Join us as

Psst celebrates the world!

1 ICELAND Brrrrr. One of the 'cold countries'. A right old spooky land, to be sure. Full of ice and mud (and volcanoes going off all over the place). There are loads of sheep here and about 13 people. Iceland is responsible for producing Magnus Magnusson. The only problem is, it isn't on our map! It seems to have sunk! Hjosk hjosk!

2 NORWAY The country that's incredibly useless at winning the Eurovision Song Contest. Norway is pretty much like Sweden except the inhabitants have red hair, are a bit more rotund and go "ho ho ho" a lot. The most famous Norwegian export is, er, erm... the only Norwegian export is, erm, er, er, Norway isn't actually famous for anything. *(What about killing baby seals? Ed)*

3 GREAT BRITAIN Ahem, except it really isn't quite so 'great' any more, let's face it. 'The Dustbin Of Europe' as they say. Ahem ahem. Er, it's quite embarrassing really. Write a letter to Margaret Thatcher and remind her. The old dear doesn't quite seem to understand these things.

4 EIRE The land of Guiness, harps, shamrocks and the Blarney Stone - we think Ireland's great. Plus they've got oodles of Speccies! (What more could you ask for?)

5 PORTUGAL Everyone in Portugal has an incredibly long name. Here's a typical example – José Salvaterra Cambados Tordoya Sobrado Figuiero Viana Castro. (And that's just what his friends call him.)



6 FLORIDA The only part of America we ever get any letters from (don't ask us why!). Unfortunately though we've lost them all, and don't know who sent them. Please write back!

7 GREECE Why is Europe like a frying pan? Because it's got Greece at the bottom. Famous Greeks include, erm, the Duke of Edinburgh and Desmond Tutu. *(I'm not so sure about Desmond. Ed)*

8 PERU Blimey. Llamas and stuff.

9 BRAZIL Blimey. Llamas and stuff.

10 ARGENTINA Blimey. Llamas and stuff.

11 ZIMBABWE Lots of gazelles, lots of giraffes, lots of vultures, and lots of Speccies! In fact Africa is full of Speccies! (Hurrah!)

12 NIGERIA Watch out for the crocs. Watch out for the snakes. Watch out for the insects. Watch out for the hippos. (Yes, hippos are dangerous.)

13 DENMARK Famous for small plastic building bricks with little nobbly bits on the top and little hole things in the bottom. That's right – Lego. And in Denmark you can find LegoLand – an entire town made out of lego bricks. The cars are made out of lego too, and so are the people – there's even a Legoland McDonalds, where you can buy shiny red Quarterpounder McLego burgers. It's a town of wonder. It's absolutely ridiculous.

14 KENYA Watch out for the lions, watch out for the zebras, watch out for the warthogs! (Yes, warthogs are dangerous too! Just ask Jonathan Davies!)

15 SPAIN If it wasn't for Spain, the world wouldn't have Sevvy Ballesteiros. Thank you, Spain.

Welcome to the map of the world. The first thing you'll notice is that it looks slightly different to the common or garden maps of the world you find in most atlases. Well, that's because it's, er, different. It's the *YS* map of the world, you see. The only countries allowed onto it are those in which *YS* is read. Holland for instance. And Poland. Have a look for yourselves.

28 ITALY Oh dear, Italians aren't very good drivers, are they? They don't take any notice at all of traffic lights. In fact, they don't take very much notice of anything at all – until they crash into it!

27 FINLAND Another 'cold country', where the sun sets at about one o'clock in the afternoon. Three out of five Finns are rally drivers while the remaining 40% are furniture manufacturers. If your surname is Pieri you should steer clear of this land – Pieri in Finnish means 'farted'. Hjekki hjekki hjekki!

26 BELGIUM A slightly use-free country stuck between Holland, Germany and France. About the only thing Belgium is known for is that disgusting vegetable the Brussel Sprout. Oh, and the Mannequin Pis, which is a statue in Brussels of a cute little boy, er, 'having a tinkle'. Belgium ought to be split into three parts and given away to its neighbours.

29 SWEDEN The land of Hurdie Ho! Another chilly country, and quite literally stuffed to the seams with Speccy owners. Sweden is famous for three things – Ingmar Bergman, Bjorn Borg and Abba. Oh, and its tourists of course, who always wear orange kagouls and block escalators – doesn't it really annoy you when they *(That's enough whinging about Swedish tourists. Ed).*

25 HOLLAND The Land Of The Clog. Hoorah for Holland. Edam and Gouda cheeses. Windmills. Tulips. Dykes. Funny hats. Lots of bicycles. The 'stereotype list' for Holland is endless, but the best of the lot is the clog – a wooden shoe. What a brilliant idea. The ideal footwear for spies and ninja warriors. On a more serious note, Holland will be one of the first major casualties of global warming and rising sea levels. *(They could always build an ark shaped like a giant clog. Ed)*

30 FRANCE The first country to be physically attached to England (if you don't count Scotland and Wales and if the Channel Tunnel ever gets finished, that is). French computer programmers are pretty weird (*Purple Saturn Day* should be proof enough) and 44% of French people enjoy being rude to the British. Mind you, who can blame them?

16 EAST GERMANY Almost the same as West Germany these days, the only difference is that they have more Speccies. Lots more! Hurrah!

24 POLAND Good old Poland. We're always getting letters from Poland. The problem is that hardly any of them seem to make any sense – "Please, and with pleasure, to send to me tea – three coffee even – of any description. Much journals free? I am a catalogue!" Things like that. Poland is famous for chart-toppers The Stone Roses. *(Are you quite sure about that? Ed)*

17 EGYPT Extremely famous for those funny big triangle doofers. *(Pyramids. Ed)* You know, those pointy stone things that look brilliant from a distance but totally scabby once you get close up to them. *(A bit like sheep really. Ed)*

23 INDIA It's a big old country, and famous for absolutely loads of things – but we're not going to tell you what they are. Oh, alright then, er, curry and, erm, er, people who sit cross-legged and go all wibbly in the head.

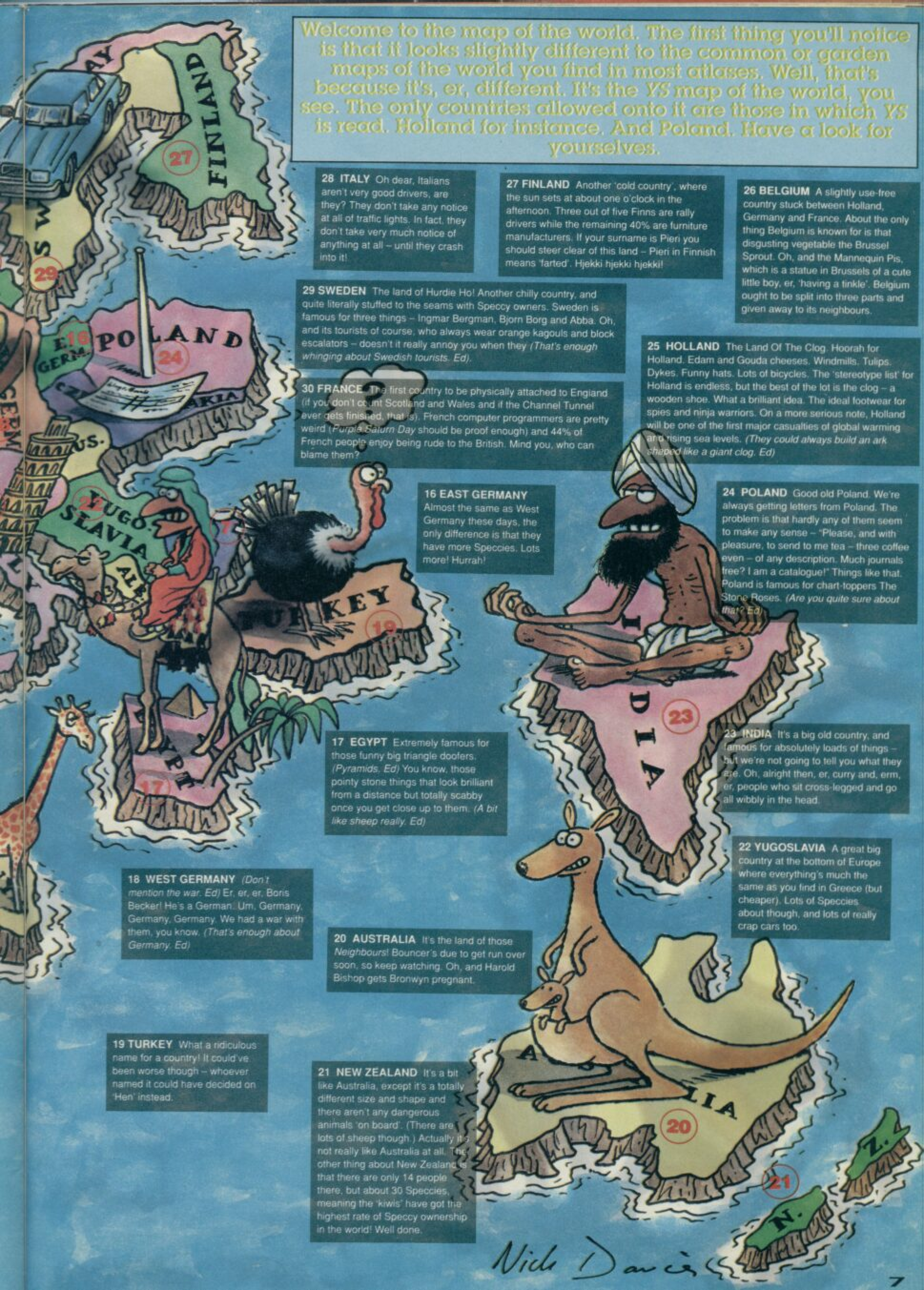
22 YUGOSLAVIA A great big country at the bottom of Europe where everything's much the same as you find in Greece (but cheaper). Lots of Speccies about though, and lots of really crap cars too.

18 WEST GERMANY *(Don't mention the war. Ed)* Er, er, er. Boris Becker! He's a German. Um, Germany, Germany, Germany. We had a war with them, you know. *(That's enough about Germany. Ed)*

20 AUSTRALIA It's the land of those *Neighbours*! Bouncer's due to get run over soon, so keep watching. Oh, and Harold Bishop gets Bronwyn pregnant.

19 TURKEY What a ridiculous name for a country! It could've been worse though – whoever named it could have decided on 'Hen' instead.

21 NEW ZEALAND It's a bit like Australia, except it's a totally different size and shape and there aren't any dangerous animals 'on board'. (There are lots of sheep though.) Actually it's not really like Australia at all. The other thing about New Zealand is that there are only 14 people there, but about 30 Speccies, meaning the 'kiwis' have got the highest rate of Speccy ownership in the world! Well done.



Psssst



NEW IMPROVED *YOUR SINCLAIR*! Now Number One by even more!!

Every six months or so the Audit Bureau of Circulations releases a long list of sales figures for the most important magazines in the UK. They're put together independently (ie they're nothing to do with us or any other magazine company) and quote an average figure for the issues over a six month period. Well, it's just come round to 'ABC' time again (for the July-December '89 period) and guess how the three Speccy-dedicated magazines stand? Well, there's *Crash* on around 55,000 a month, somewhere above that there's *Sinclair User* (63,000) and then way above either of them (on just over 70,000 to be exact) there's us!! Hurrah!!

This is really good news for us obviously (and shows the biggest gap between *YS* and its rivals in years) so I'd just like to take this brief opportunity to say a big 'thank you' to all those folk who helped put us there, but are, alas, no longer with us (snif). First, there're the two old Art Eds/Chicks, Catherine Higgs (now of *Zero*) and Catherine Peters (currently designing a shopping centre on Princes Street in Edinburgh) who were both blooming brilliant really. Then there are the writers – Jackie Ryan (now of *Just Seventeen*), Duncan MacDonald (preparing for a trip to the Far East at the moment with a pair of flip-flops and a video camera – or so he claims) and Davey Wilson (now on *Zero* too), who all brought their individual personalities and styles to *YS* and helped make it what it is. Thanks, guys! (Luckily they're all still working for us on a freelance basis, so hopefully you might not have even noticed they've gone.) Finally, there's T'zer, ex-Ed and ex-Publisher, without whom etc etc. (Blimey, I'd better stop there before I start to blub!)







DUSTY FLEMING'S GREAT HAIRSTYLES OF OUR TIMES No 2 Barry Gibb

An exceptionally influential cut, Barry's subtly permed and blow-dried locks lent themselves perfectly to many interesting photographic effects, including this rather wonderful back-lit look. Here he seems to actually radiate a sense of health and good feeling. Barry's lead was followed by many fashion-concious young men on both sides of the Atlantic, and is believed to have been a major inspiration to other successful '70s cuts, like the 'John Craven' and the 'Farrah Fawcett'. An astounding hairstyle.

FULL PRICE

This Month	Last Month	Game
1	NE	*Rainbow Islands*
2	2	*Chase HQ*
3	1	*Gazza's Super Soccer*
4	6	*Batman The Movie*
5	5	*Robocop*
6	NE	*Scramble Spirits*
7	RE	*Turbo OutRun*
8	RE	*Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*
9	NE	*P47*
10	NE	*X-Out*

BUDGETS

This Month	Last Month	Game
1	NE	*Hit Squad*
2	NE	*Bounty Hunter*
3	2	*Fantasy World Dizzy*
4	NE	*World Soccer*
5	1	*Paperboy*
6	4	*Ghosts 'n' Goblins*
7	3	*Buggy Boy*
8	NE	*Super League*
9	RE	*Dizzy*
10	NE	*4-Soccer Sims*

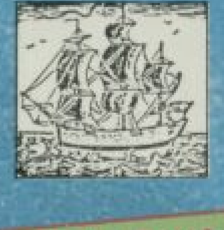
Compiled by the Virgin Megastore, Oxford Street, London W1

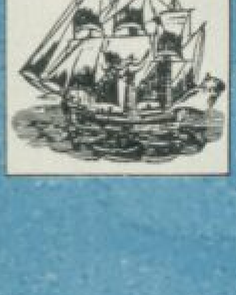


SO WHAT'S THIS BIZARRE LOOKING DEVICE THEN?

It's Spectravideo's spooky new joystick, that's what! And what's so spooky about it? Well, simply that it comes totally unencumbered by wires and leads and works purely by infra-red rays! (Blimey!) Operating from a distance of up to 30 feet away from the computer (not that you'd be able to see the game from there) it signals the user's movements to a special control box you plug into the back of your computer. The advantages then are clear (no clumsy wires to trip over etc) but then so are the disadvantages – a slightly suspect-looking shape (though we haven't tried it yet so it might work quite well) and a fairly hefty £39.95 price tag. You pays your money and you makes your choice.







With The Best Intentions In The World Dept

You may remember last issue we promised that every time we review a new Speccy game we'd put a little box at the bottom of the page telling you whether the blooming thing would work on your SAM Coupé or not. Well, um, it hasn't actually happened, has it? (Sorree!)

What went wrong? Well, simply this – nobody (not the software houses, not MGT, and certainly not good old YS) seem to know yet which new games will work and which ones won't. Testing for SAM compatibility is pretty low priority for most software houses, so by the time they've actually worked out if it'll work or not it's often too late for inclusion in the mag. (We could try testing them ourselves but a) it takes up too much time and b) the fact that our review copies often have a different loader on them from the street versions mucks things up a bit.)

So where does that leave us? Well, in a bit of a re-think situation, basically. SAM owners shouldn't despair though! Help is at hand, in the form of Robin Alway – SAM Surgeon, whose brand new column starts this issue. No doubt we'll be able to clear up this compatibility stuff in time, and he's just the man to do it. We also have our first ever SAM listing in *Program Pitstop* this ish, which explains how to actually make your Speccy games function on the spanky new machine. Hurrah!

T'zers

• Anco will be following up its ultra-successful *Kick Off* (well, ultra-successful on 16-bit, anyway) with a sequel in early May, imaginatively titled *Kick Off 2*. That'll be a good month or two before *Player Manager*, a combination of *Kick Off*-style action game and *Football Manager* strategy, hits your local high street.

• *Defenders Of The Earth*, Enigma Variations' first game as publisher (though not as developer) will be followed by further cartoon licences later in the year. A *Wacky Races/Dastardly And Mutley* project is scheduled for around September (hurrah!), though there may be another one before then 'if *Defenders* does well'.

• It's been all quiet on the Dinamic front ever since the last game from Spain's finest (*Grand Prix Master*) proved so impossibly hard that nobody could qualify for a thing. But that's all about to change! Not only is *Astro Marine Corps* (see *Future Shocks*) about to hit the shelves, but *Cozumel*, an adventure game, and the more action-oriented *Satan* will be out fairly soon too!

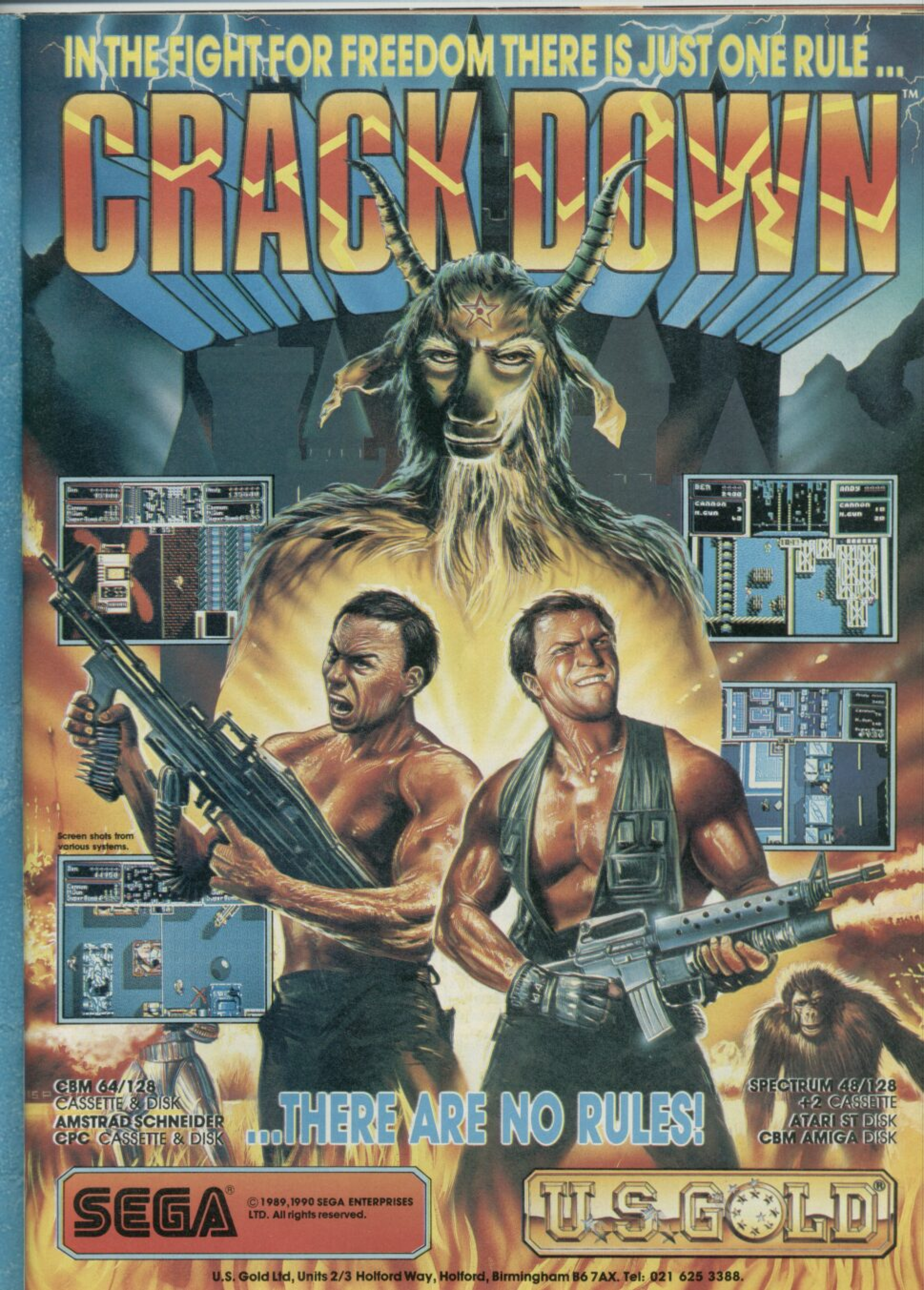
• Another year to wait for the next James Bond film, but in the meantime Domark is keeping everyone reminded that it's got the 007 licence (to kill) by shifting through the movie back catalogue and picking something that looks good. And guess what's what's on the boards this time? Yup, *The Spy Who Loved Me*, ideal for a *Spy Hunter*-type vertical scroller (itself a Bond rip-off), what with all the car-that-turns-into-a-submarine-then-back-into-a-car-again action bits. Sounds like a natural!

• Time for a quick round-up of footie games out on the Spectrum for World Cup time – and there's oodles of them! First up we've got Addictive's *World Cup Football Manager*, closely followed by the aforementioned *Kick Off 2* and *Player Manager* from Anco, while Again Again's *Vinnie Jones* (September) misses the boat entirely. Goliath has *Subbuteo* (complete with 'flick to kick') for May/June, CDS offers *European Superleague* around Easter, both Ocean and Grandslam release 'official' Liverpool licences this year, Grandslam (again) has an official England team game scheduled, Krisalis has *Manchester United*, Ocean has *The Golden Boot* later in the year, Virgin has *World Cup Soccer '90* in May and US Gold has *Italy '90* in April. (Phew!) And we've not even mentioned the budgies (like the Codies' official *Italia '90*)! Bored of football games? Don't worry – you will be!

• Back with Grandslam for a moment – it's also got a Wimbledon tennis game on its books, planned for (of course) Wimbledon time, as well as a 'secret for the moment' film licence on course for an October release. What could it be?

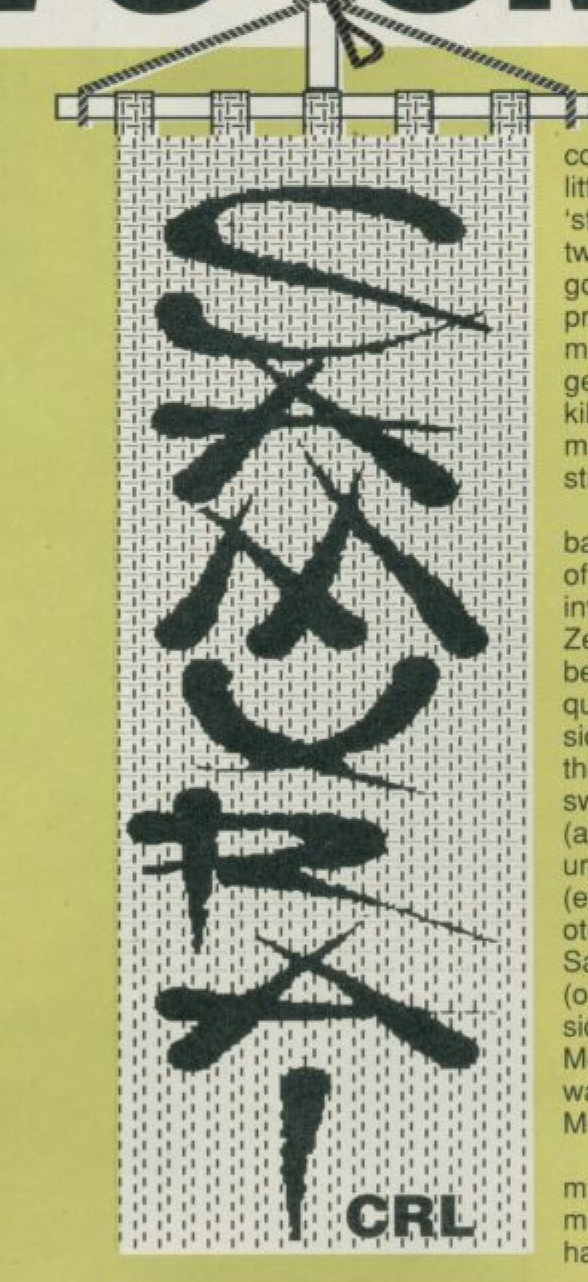
• Hewson's *Christmas Collection* (reviewed in YS 47) has just been re-released, bundled with a 'free' joystick and renamed *Joystick Thunder*. It got 93 and a Best Buy when we reviewed it at the end of last year (hardly surprising since it boasts games like *Cybernoid II*, *Uridium Plus* and *Exolon*) so it could be well worth seeking out (if you haven't already).

• Thalamus has five titles on the drawing board, starting with the Speccy version of *Delta* – now renamed *Delta Charge!* (see *Future Shocks*). Following that over the next few months will be *Armalyte* and *The Search For Sharla*, eventually leading into a platform game called *Creatures* and (possibly) an unnamed 3D rally game. Some of these are planned in SAM specific versions too. Hurrah!


IN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM THERE IS JUST ONE RULE ...
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Screen shots from various systems.
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CPC CASSETTE & DISK
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YS SMASH T

Blimey O'Reilly O'Rourke!! Would you believe this is our 30th (30th!!) Smash Tape?! And is it packed to the brim with goodies? Yes, of course it is! There's *Samurai*, a complete oriental strategy game from CRL and then a bit of light relief courtesy of Grandslam – a playable level from that brand new blaster *Scramble Spirits*! Let's face it, folks – it's a bit of a corker!



Tying in ever so neatly with this month's (vaguely) oriental theme comes *Samurai*, an incredibly playable little strategy game from CRL. There's no 'struggling with a 400 page manual for two hours trying to understand what's going on' malarky here – everything's pretty straightforward and fast-moving, meaning it takes almost no effort at all to get straight into the serious business of killing people. It's enough to turn even the most died-in-the-wool arcade fan into a strategy buff almost overnight. Hurrah!

So what do you have to do? Well, basically, you play the leader of a group of Samurai warriors, on a mission to invade the temple of a fanatical sect of Zen Buddhist monks (who also happen to be pretty handy martial artists on the quiet) and, um, kill them all. You control a side made up of four sorts of character – the armoured Samurai (who fight with swords), the lower class Ashigaru warrior (armed with stick weapons), the unarmoured but very proficient Ninjas (equipped with throwing stars among other weapons) and the Mounted Samurai, who were heavily armoured and (of course) rode horses. The computer side consists of armed Monks, Samurai Monks (often considered the best warriors of them all) and Young Samurai Monks (still in training).

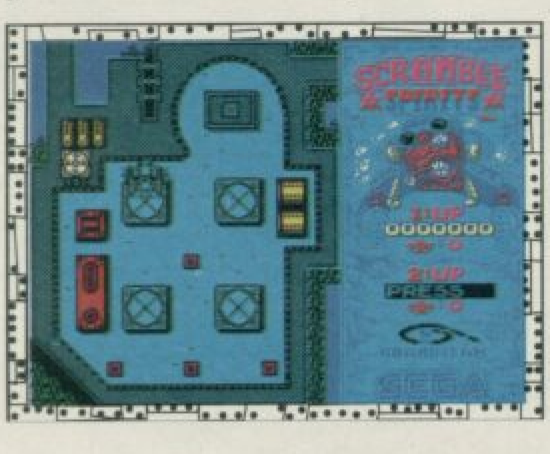
Fighting is done on a strictly 'I'll take my turn then you take yours' basis as in most strategy games. Here's what you have to do...

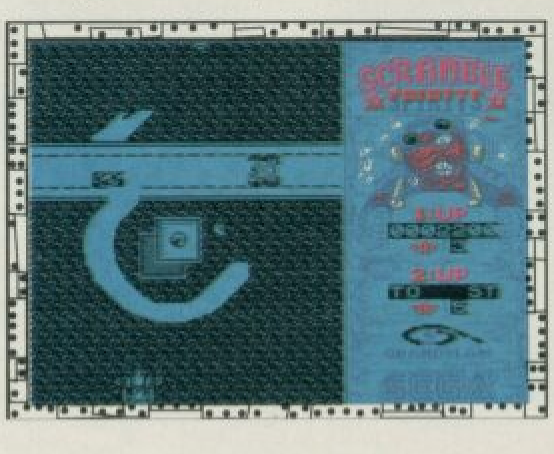
SCRAMBLE SPIRITS

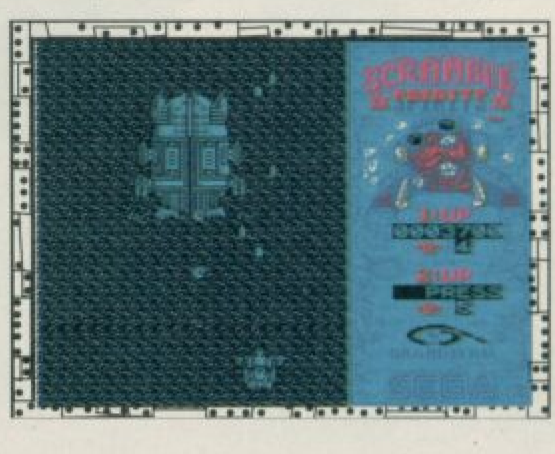
Grandslam

Dunc reviewed this snazzy new vertical scroller a couple of issues ago (in fact, we put it on the cover), so we don't really need to say all that much about it now, except that here's your chance to review it yourself! (Well, the first level at least).

You play a WW2 fighter pilot caught up in a birrova time warp and catapulted into a spooky-looking future world, packed full of horrible wibbly alien aeroplanes, tanks and things. Yep, it's a case of 'shoot everything that moves and quite a lot of the things that don't' – no thinking involved (apart from making sure you collect the right power-ups). Simple, huh? (But a lot of fun nontheless!)







TAPE NO 30

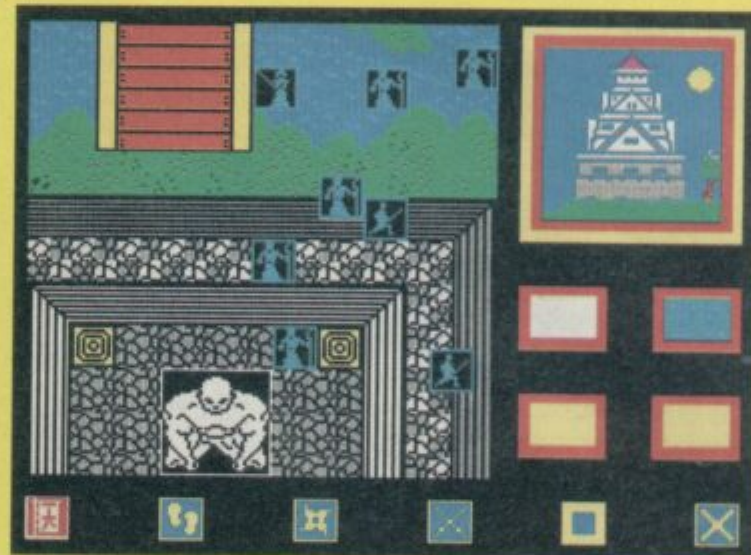
1 Load the game, select the level of play (One to Three, One being easy, Three being hard) and then select which of the three incidents (ie battles) you wish to fight.

2 Select your own side with your Kempston joystick or keys (see tape inlay card), paying attention to the number above each warrior which indicates his value, and choosing with M or the fire button. Move your cursor over the 'sad' face and press M to take out any warrior you choose by mistake. All set? Now move the cursor to the icon on the far right and press fire or M to start the game.

3 Now you're in the main game. The computer automatically scrolls to the first warrior you have to move, then to the next one and so on. Move the cursor to select the 'Two Feet' icon if you decide to move a warrior. It then displays his movement points in the yellow window to the left and you can shift him about with joystick or keys. Press fire or M (again) to end movement.

Choose the 'Throwing Star' icon to hurl a missile (Ninjas only) and aim it using the sights that appear in the top-right window – choose your angle then fire, but beware! This uses up some of your precious movement allocation points. Oh, and you can't throw stars at enemies standing next to you.

What else is there? Well, the 'Crossed Swords' icon takes you quickly to the next combat phase, while 'X' quits the game. Ignore the other two – they don't do very much at all.



4 Combat is automatic when you finish your movement stage. Watch out for the stamina levels of the two characters as they shrink (shown in the far right box for you and the cyan one for him). And remember, ALWAYS try to outnumber your enemy in close combat!

5 To win the game you have to clear the map of enemy characters – points are awarded for the difficulty level you attempt, the size of the enemy side and the number of moves you take to beat them. Good luck!

For those of you who are into strategy games *Samurai* is a real treat, and for those who've never played one in your life before, give it a go – it's one of the most accessible and playable ones around. In fact, you're gonna have a ball! Hurrah!

Tape Trubbs

Oh no! You've received a slightly 'naughty' tape attached to the front of your *YS* – one that simply refuses to load! It's a nightmare, isn't it? But don't despair, because we've thought of the solution for you! Simply bung the offending tape in an envelope, enclose an sae, and post it off to *YS* Tape Returns No 30 *Samurai*, Ablex Audio Video Ltd, Harcourt, Halesfield 14, Telford, Shropshire TF7 4QD. Give them a few weeks to 'turn it around' and – as if by magic – a brand spanking new cassette will be yours!

SAMURAI controls
Kempston joystick or keys
O=Left; P=Right; Q=Up;
A=Down; M=Fire

SCRAMBLE SPIRITS controls
Joystick or keyboard

SAMURAI / SCRAMBLE SPIRITS

YOUR SINCLAIR

YS SMASH TAPE NO 30

SAMURAI

The complete stategy adventure from CRL

PLUS

SCRAMBLE SPIRITS

A complete playable level from Grandslam's new shoot-'em-up

SAMURAI /CRL

A very playable and easy-to-get-to-into strategy game, starring YOU as an oriental warlord and the computer as your opponent. Kill people! Invade fortresses! Move little square shaped icons around a map! It's a must!

©*Your Sinclair* /CRL

SCRAMBLE SPIRITS /Grandslam

A no-nonsense vertically-scrolling blaster featuring diddy little aeroplanes! Shoot giant alien spook planes! Shoot mini alien spook tanks! Shoot middle-sized alien anti-aircraft guns! Then start all over again! Hurrah!

©*Your Sinclair* /Grandslam

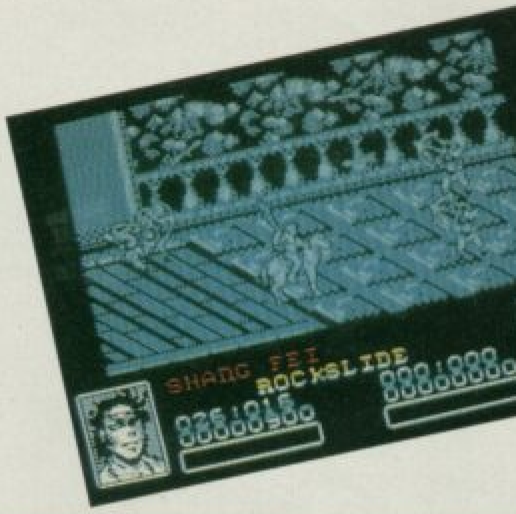
Don't say "Not another horizontally-scrolling beat-'em-up type thing!", because US Gold's *Dynasty Wars* has oodles to recommend it – the best drawn horses ever to appear on the Speccy for a start! *Matt Bielby* mounted his trusty steed and rode off for a taste of the Orient.

DYNAST

It's Full Of Ea

Well, it might be called 'Dynasty', but I can assure you there ain't a shoulder pad in sight! (Okay, maybe a few bamboo armour ones, but they don't count.) US Gold's latest Capcom coin-op conversion boasts eight levels of scrolling beat-'em-up/arcade adventure with a pretty authentic Chinese flavour. Each archer, horseman and samurai (and there are hundreds of them) is pretty accurately represented, with realistic and ultra-detailed backdrops, and the weapons are mainly swords, spears and bows. In fact, what with a distinct lack of end-of-level baddies and other fantasy elements, it's really only our hero's energy-bolt firing stick thing that gives the game away.

Plot is of the 'two horsemen take on the evil warlords who've put a blight on the land' variety. Each monochrome level features a variety of oriental backdrops, including forests, bridges, villages, and, at one point, what looks to be a section of the Great Wall Of China. Perhaps two of the most distinctive settings are the series of giant moving rafts you have to cross on Level Two, and the snowy wastes of Level Four, but there's lots of other good stuff too – the last two levels being the most packed since they're about twice the length of the early ones!



This is the game in one-player mode, with only one horseman obviously! Here he looks like he's about to get attacked by some archers, but they'd better watch out – there's a rockslide on the way!



Sorry about this, all you 48K guys, but it's only in 128 mode that you'll be able to see these rather nifty and colourful loading screens, outlining the various characters and their abilities. Boo!

Your Four Characters

Before starting the game you (and your pal if you're playing in two-player mode) have to choose a character to control, of which the computer gives you a field of four. Though they look exactly the same as each other on-screen (apart from the little portraits at the bottom of the picture, of course) each in fact has slightly different properties. For instance, Lui Bei is a physically powerful chappy, but he ain't too hot in the old mental power department (bear with me, I'll explain what that means in a minute) while Kaun Yu is particularly brainy but physically quite weak. The other two (Shang Fei and Shao Yun – don't ask me how you pronounce any of these!) have a more even spread of abilities.

What it all adds up to is this. You, as a player, are basically the sum of your physical and mental parts – how hard you can hit is determined by the two abilities added together. Your physical strength is basically your stamina (ie how many blows you can sustain before you die) and this shrinks each time you get hit. In contrast, your mental strength never decreases, but it's worthless on its own, only useful for augmenting physical strength for extra hitting power. Both can be increased, however, by picking up icon bubbles, which can either be found trapped in chests and other likely places or released from the bodies of some of your more powerful horse-backed enemies.

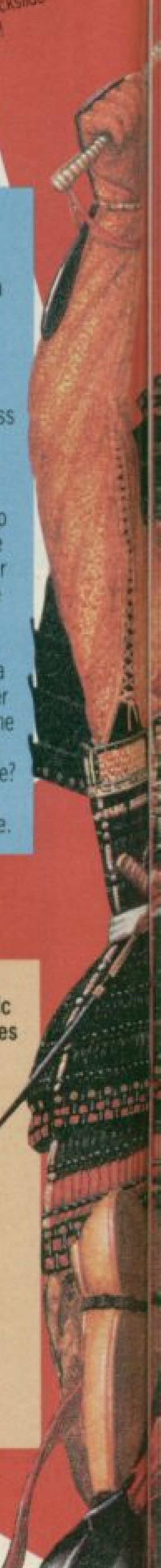
By the way, if you just rewind a bit you'll see I said each character looks pretty much the same on the screen – so how on earth do you tell them apart in two-player mode? Easy – player one rides a black horse, and player two a white one.



Yikes! That looks like a riderless horse in the middle of the screen there which means... one of our heroes has been unseated and killed! (I'm not sure which one though.) Oh no!

Dynasty Wars The Coin-Op

Capcom's *Dynasty Wars* was a rather impressive machine which initially hit the arcades in the summer of '89 – impressive mainly because of the amount of detail and spectacle involved as the two human players took on oodles of mounted samurais and foot soldiers with often ten or so little figures running around in all directions over the screen. As in the Speccy version, our heroes never leave their mounts (except when they're dead, when they sort of fall off backwards). This made the controls slightly tricky to get to grips with – the realistic animal animation of the horses and the sheer size of each one made positioning for a clear shot slightly tricky at times. Still, a lot of lovely detail and loads going on made it a birrova goodie, the main criticism being that with eight similar levels it could be a bit samey. Still well worth keeping an eye out for though.

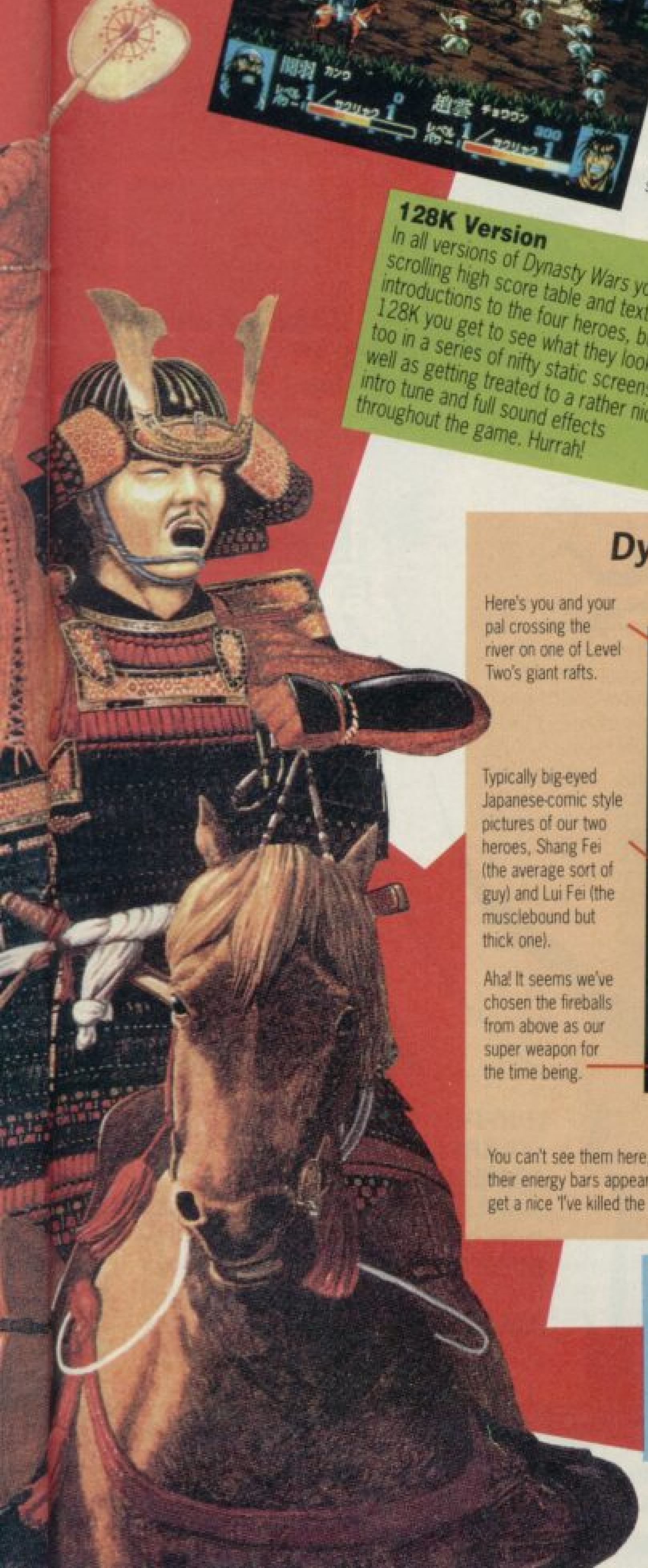


TY WARS

astern Promise!



And here's a shot from the Dynasty Wars coin-op. Nice and colourful, isn't it? Here 'our boys' get attacked by an enemy horseman and a whole host of other blokes. Shoo, go on, shoo!



128K Version

In all versions of *Dynasty Wars* you get a scrolling high score table and text introductions to the four heroes, but on 128K you get to see what they look like too in a series of nifty static screens, as well as getting treated to a rather nice intro tune and full sound effects throughout the game. Hurrah!

Weapons

You're given exactly the same weaponry whichever character you choose, namely a single pike/spear thing which prods out in front of your horse. It's a slightly spooky pike/spear thing though in that when you hold the fire button down for long enough, then release it, it fires a built-up energy ball (much like the weapons in *R-Type*). An energy bar at the bottom of the screen allows you to judge exactly the right moment to fire.

The enemies are different though – some have swords, some have long-range weapons like arrows, but none fire spooky energy balls in the same way that you do. Since there are about 600 times as many of them as there are of you it's really only fair.

There's also a sort of smart bomb device available, though, unlike your run-of-the-mill smart bombs, this can't be guaranteed to wipe the screen clean of baddies – most of the smaller ones it'll deal with alright, but with some of the more powerful horse-backed opponents it's more likely to just knock their energy levels down a bit. (Of course if you've already depleted their energy it should knock them off-screen altogether.) In the coin-op of course there were four of these super weapons, but the Speccy version only gets the two – 'Explosions', which drops three large fireballs down on the play area, and 'Rock Slide' which does a similar thing but with boulders. (The missing two, by the way, are 'Fire', which sees three archers run on-screen and launch flaming arrows at the bad guys, and 'Ambush' which adds an extra horseman to your side – both were deemed far too complicated to fit on the Speccy.)

Dynasty Warriors

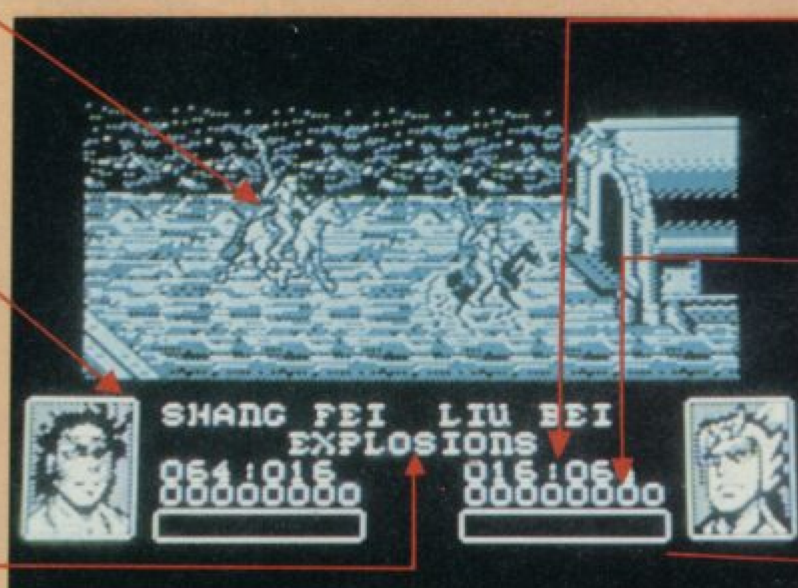
The company behind *Dynasty Wars* is Tiertex, the Manchester-based development house which has done a lot of work for US Gold lately. For instance, Chris Brunning, the programmer, has previously slaved away on the Speccy *Strider* and *Last Duel*. So who were you partners in crime with, Chris? "Well, let's see now. There was James Clarke who did the graphics, and then Mark Tait was responsible for the music. Basically we're very pleased with what we've achieved with the conversion – if you like these sort of horizontally-scrolling action games you'll love it. I basically think of it as *Scramble* on horseback." There you go – straight from the horse's mouth.

Dynasty Wars – what's what and who's who!

Here's you and your pal crossing the river on one of Level Two's giant rafts.

Typically big-eyed Japanese-comic style pictures of our two heroes, Shang Fei (the average sort of guy) and Lui Fei (the musclebound but thick one).

Aha! It seems we've chosen the fireballs from above as our super weapon for the time being.



These two numbers indicate your physical strength level (the first one) and your mental proficiency (the second).

Here are the big scores. Um, the lads haven't done too well so far, have they?

And finally the power bar, of use when building up a big mega-blow with your lance.

You can't see them here, but when you take on any of the enemy generals (one to be defeated at the end of each level) or other major baddies, their energy bars appear at the edge of the screen, so you can keep tabs on how they're standing up to punishment. Hopefully you'll eventually get a nice 'I've killed the General' message to see you through to the next level.

FAX BOX	
Game	*Dynasty Wars*
Publisher	US Gold
Programmers	Tiertex
Price	To be announced
Release date	June


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DAN DARE III
The Escape
RELEASE DATE APRIL 14th 1990
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WIN!

A REMOTE CONTROL COLOUR TV!

PLUS! COPIES OF VIRGIN MASTERTRONIC'S *WORLD CUP SOCCER '90*!

AND! A BUNDLE OF VIRGIN FOOTBALL SHIRTS!

Invasion force

'Ere we go, 'ere we go, 'ere we go! That's right, Spec-chums, it's time to pop down the hairdressers for a Gazza's Super Cut and start sewing pretty Union Jack flags with motifs like 'Brain 'em, Brian!' emblazoned across them. Yup, World Cup year is well and truly upon us and the excitement's reaching fever pitch, not least here in the *YS* shed! So imagine our delight when we heard that Virgin Mastertronic is all set to release a footie sim especially for the occasion (which'll take place in Italy), appropriately entitled *World Cup Soccer '90*. As reported in last issue's *Future Shocks* , the game will feature all this summer's qualifying teams (for real 'imagine you're there' excitement!), a two-player option and a view of the goal from the position of both striker and keeper. Sounds stompin'! And, somewhat spookily, *World Cup Soccer '90* just happens to be the subject of this 'ere compo. Hurrah!

Snooze control

So guess what our first prize is! Two tickets for the final, all expenses paid? A football with the signatures of the winning team players on it? Or even the chance to participate in half-an-hour's scintillating live BBC commentary with Emlyn Hughes? Um, as a matter of fact no. It's a TV. A Pye 2012 Remote Control 14 Inch Colour TV to be precise. Now what on earth are *YS* and Virgin Mastertronic doing giving away a TV, we hear you ask. Simple.

How many times have you been sat in front of your living room telly, quietly enjoying the sophisticated company of Mr Doobie Duck, when your mum comes in and flicks on *Sons And Daughters* (or something)? "Aaaawww, mum!" "Shurrup 'n' do your homework or your father'll make you eat coal for the rest of the week." You know the story. So just imagine what it's going to be like during the World Cup – absolute blue blinkin' murder, that's what!! Hence the telly. Not only will you get to catch all the coverage in the privacy of your own room but also stay in bed the whole time *and* not bother to switch it off late at night. That's right, 'cos not only does this once-in-a-lifetime prize have 40 programme synthesized tuning (oooooh!) and an on-screen display to indicate which channel you're watching (aaaaah!), it's also got a sleep timer setting of up to 90 minutes. Corking, eh? That means you can set the time for it to switch off, snuggle up with your remote control (to zap channels when Emlyn starts gibbering away) and, er, fall asleep. Incredible but true! What's more, the lucky swine gets the same two prizes that the runners-up get, which are...

Twelve copies of Virgin's up-'n'-comin' *World Cup Soccer '90* and another 12 ultra-fabby one-off Virgin football shirts! They're the genuine article and no mistake!

RULES

- No players from Future City or Virgin United are allowed onto the pitch or they'll be 'cornered' and 'kicked off'.
- All entries must be received by 31 May 1990 or they'll miss the final whistle.
- Matt's the ref with final say so you'd better be on the ball and not mess with him.

Winning's the game!

As for how to enter, well, you can forget about easy-peasy piccie puzzles like 'how many balls can you spot between Peter Shilton's goalposts (oo-er)?' for a start. Nope, we're down to the real nitty gritty here. We've come up with three brain-blistering footie questions which even Jackie (our resident *YS* soccer mascot, ahem, know-it-all) had more than a little trouble answering. So, without further ado, it's over to David Coleman in the studio. David, the questions, please...

Eeeerr, well yes, and it's quite remarkable really because, er... even I don't know the answers!! Quite incredible. And the first one is...

■ **Who scored the goals in England's legendary (legendary because they haven't come close to it since, ha), um, World Cup win in 1966?**

(No conferring please.) Second question...

■ **Where was the first World Cup tournament held?**

And, finally, the, um, very final question...

■ **Which is the only team to have taken part in all 13 tournaments?**

Not too hard that last one when you think about it but,eeerr, since I haven't thought about it then I really haven't the foggiest. Ha ha. Eeeerrr... (snip).

Thank you, David. Right, now you've got the questions all that's left to do is fill out the coupon with the relevant details, stick it onto the back of a postcard (please!) and post it off to *Dribble Wibble Pass It Down The Middle Gosh I'm So Excited I'm Bursting For A Tiddle (Blimey!)* Compo, *Your Sinclair*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2AP. And remember the closing date, Spec-chums – it's May 31st 1990.

Haven't a clue. But Dad reckons that...

1) is ....

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A STUNNINGLY REALISTIC FOOTBALL STRATEGY GAME



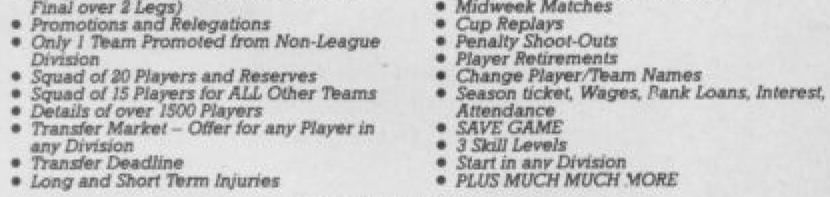
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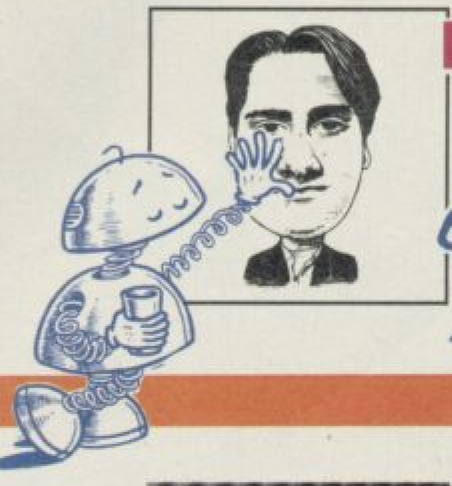
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ROBIN ALWAY SAM Surgeon



As you might have twigged from the recent sharp increase in street parties, hip-hip-hoorahing and exuberant throwing of hats in the air the SAM Coupé is finally here! It may have had a gestation period longer than that of the African elephant but MGT's new baby is brilliant – a power-without-the-price Spectrum for the '90s if we ever saw one. Despite the fact that our new-found buddy's only been around for a month or so, exciting new developments are already, erm, developing and because I'd hate to see you out of date, listening to Abba and wearing silver-spangled platform shoes here's the first collectors edition of a regular page devoted to everything and anything in the least bit Coupéish. Already there's loads of hot Coupé poop you need to hear about so without further ado let's get on with the column.

It's a hard and brutal fact of life that computers without software are a bit crap and unentertaining (exactly like Sonya in fact). Of course the SAM's never going to be completely softwareless as literally thousands of Speccy games are compatible with it but what we Coupérians are really after is brand new stuff that takes advantage of the Coupé's clever trouser capabilities. Conscious of the need for Coupé-specific titles, MGT has drawn up a huge, all-encompassing master plan to flood the world market with mounds of SAM software. It's pretty complicated, as master plans tend to be, and works on three different fronts.



Alan Miles

For starters, MGT is offering cash. Whereas you and I might just stretch to a pint and a bag of chips as enticements to programmers for SAM software, MGT has a staggering £20,000 in prize money to give away to the sickeningly talented people who come up with the best Coupé-specific software this year. The moolah is being divided as follows...

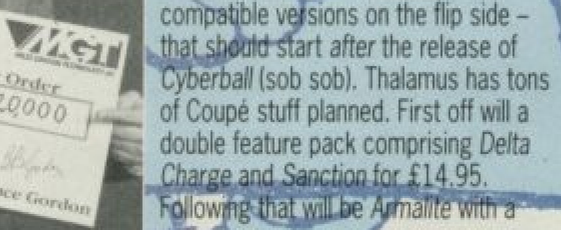
The first prize of £15,000 (gulp!) goes to the very best original SAM game of the year. Then there's £500 on offer for the best piece of Coupé software in the March/April, May/June, July/August and September/October periods. And lastly, three special prizes of £1,000 will go to the best under-12 entry, the best 12-16 entry and the best non-game of the year.

As you can see MGT isn't messing about and for talented programmers who don't fancy doing a bank job or, even worse, appearing on *Wheel Of Fortune*, the Coupé begins to look like a worthwhile investment. Of course, the games will have to be good to bag up the prize money so if I were you I'd leave those Basic fruit machine sims and character set designers under the bed, for the sake of the independent judge, industry mag *Computer Trade Weekly*.

MGT's second form of attack is to publish Coupé-specific software itself. Miles Gordon and entourage are currently busy waving cheque books around, buying up old-but-excellent Speccy classics like Mike Singleton's *Lords Of Midnight*, *Doomdark's Revenge* and *Dark Sceptre*. Not to mention around eight old Codie games, including *BMX Sim*. These will be dusted off, enhanced to take advantage of the Coupé's superior capabilities and then flogged off at budget prices. A disk of ten SAM games for a tenner is also a possibility.

There's also a horde (or possibly two) of third party product set for unleashment at a software shop near you soon. Take a look at the following list, feel the quality, marvel at the range and cheer loudly!

Audiogenic's first SAM release will be *Emlyn Hughes Arcade Quiz* so at last we'll be able to enjoy Emy's pullovers without colour clash. All Domark's Spectrum releases will have SAM compatible versions on the flip side – that should start *after* the release of *Cyberball* (sob sob). Thalamus has tons of Coupé stuff planned. First off will a double feature pack comprising *Delta Charge* and *Sanction* for £14.95. Following that will be *Armalite* with a



BMX Sim

price tag of £12.95 and hot on its heels is the *Kuwait Team Ford Rally Game* which'll set back Coupé owners £14.95.



Doomdark's Revenge



There'll be a wealth of budget software as well, with Zeppelin weighing in with such dubiously titled products as *Spagetti Western Simulator, Kick Box Vigilante, Mountain Bike Simulator, Blinky's School* and *World Soccer*. Faithful purveyor of cheapies Atlantis is offering *Snowball From Hell* for the Coupé and Kosmos plans to foist *Junior Quiz* on us too.

As well as games, games and possibly even more games some tasty-sounding Coupé specific utility and education software is due for release. Tasman should have released its definitive word processing package *Tasword 2* for the new machine by now and PCG is making available an enhanced version of its spiffing suite of three desktop publishing progs for £37.95. The word processing piece of this will be available separately for £13.95. Also the successful education progs *Fun School 2* and *3* are being Coupéised by Database.

And there you have it, positive proof that the SAM's going to be very well supplied with software for this year at the very least. On that cockle-warming note I'll leave you for this month. In the meantime I'd love to see some stuff from *you*, my fellow SAMsters, so if you've got any Coupé-specific hints, POKEs or wrinkles send 'em in. Equally well received are details of Coupé fanzines, user groups, public domain libraries and that kind of thing. So heave everything remotely Coupé-esque.to me, Robin Alway (SAM Surgeon), at *Your Sinclair*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2AP.

STOP PRESS!

Just as we were going to bed (as we say in the trade) with this issue, what should come along but a brief note from some folk called The Coupé Connection, a brand new SAM Coupé user group. They're asking for PD (Public Domain, ie anybody can use it for free) material for the SAM so they can share it around, particularly demos on sound and an interrupt scroller. Any offers? For more info the address to contact is 10 Ricardo Road, Old Windsor, Berkshire SL4 2NU.

Domark/Tengen/£9.99 cass/ £14.99 disk (128K only)



CYBERBALL

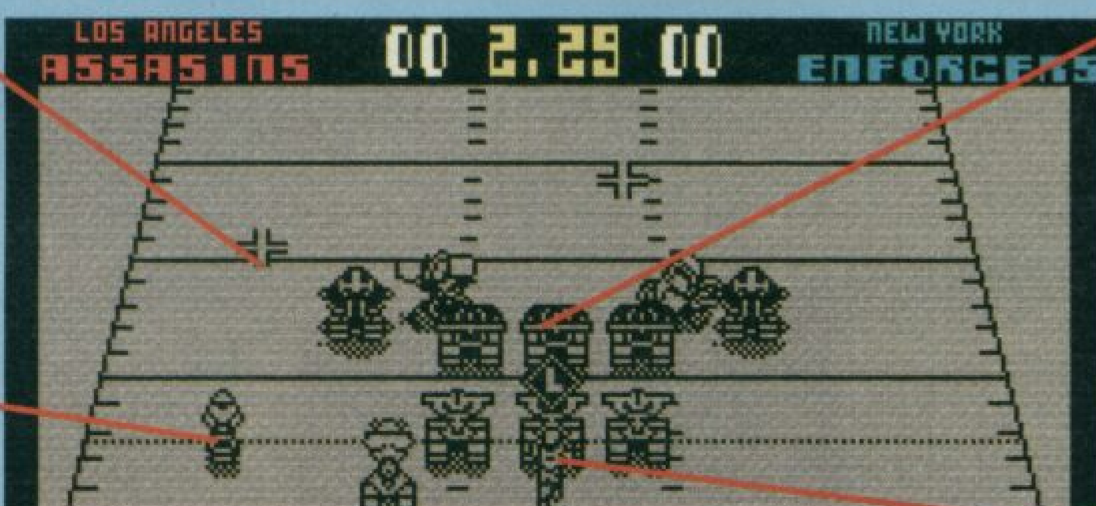
Davey Since the dawn of creation man has pondered three all-important questions – 'What is the meaning of life?', 'What came first, the chicken or the egg?' and 'How on earth do you play American Football?'. Well, if you think today's version of the game is complex just wait 'til the 21st century! It's become so violent that humans don't want to play anymore! Oh no, instead it's the poor robots who take their place (and the pasting!). And this is what *Cyberball* is all about!

If you're not that familiar with American footie, here's a brief synopsis... Huge teams of humans run about in a game broken into several plays. Each consists of four 'downs'. Each down is an attempt to keep posession of the ball and move it up the field ten yards. Fail at your fourth attempt *(Or 'down'? Ed)* (Right, you're getting the hang of it!) and you lose posession to your opponents. *Cyberball* is played by huge teams of massive metal robots (or in the case of the Speccy by teams of seven monchrome robot sprites). The rest is similar, except that as an added incentive to gain the ten yards the ball is timed to explode!!! Eek!

Now, in each down you have to choose a 'play' (or routine) for your team to perform and there are loads of them depends upon whether you're defending or attacking. You have a time limit in which to choose these plays (which is nowhere near long enough to figure out exactly what you should be doing!).

Right, into the gameplay. The pitch scrolls vertically up and down with the action and the teams move likewise (but slowly) chasing the ball. By clicking the fire button you can choose which player to control in defence. In attack you first control the receiver. From the 'play' you've selected, you'll have several options for places to throw the ball, and these will be marked by crosses on the screen. Your robots will start to move toward these as play begins. The ball goes to your receiver and then you choose which cross to throw the ball to. As soon as it's thrown, this cross is highlighted and you take control of the robot nearest it. Move over it, catch the ball and then leg it toward the goal line pronto! Do this enough times and you win the game (and get lots of cash). Simple, isn't it? Er... no. It's actually very complicated.

In two-player games you're both on the same side, one catching and one passing. There's a limited amount of sound, the nicest bit being the sort of static noise that approximates to cheering as you kick off. There are lots of subtleties here including robots with different speeds and

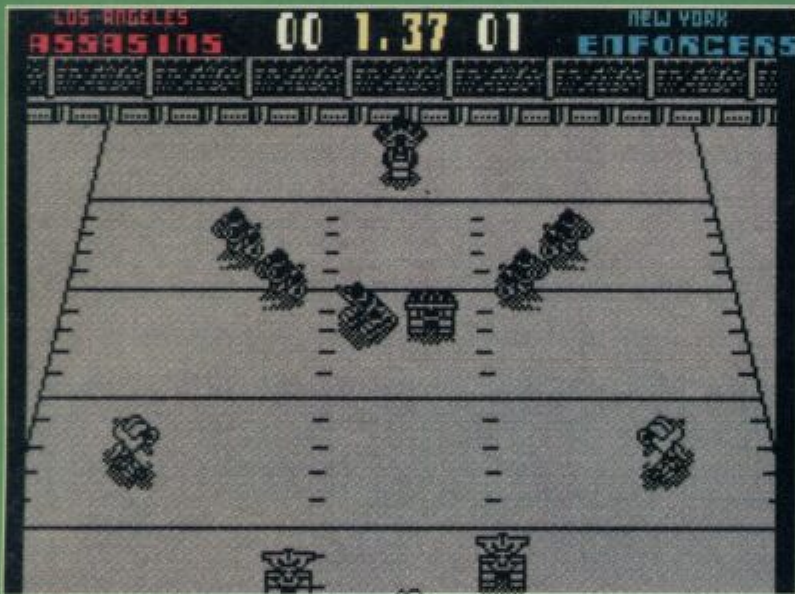


This cross marks one of the possible places you pass to (but best to be sure there's a robot waiting to catch it before you do!).

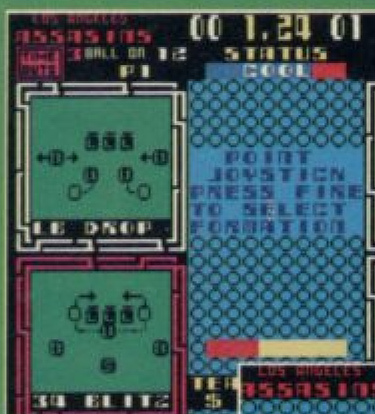
This is one of your speeding little 'running back' robots. Pass the ball to him and he'll be the ideal bod to whizz up-field with it. (I wish I was 'running back' home for tea and away from this very complicated game.)

And these are all the opposing team robots you've got to avoid. (Big, aren't they?)

This humanoid chap is the quarterback. He receives the ball when it's first 'hut-hutted' out from between the 'legs' of the big robot in the 'scrimmage line' in front of him. (Can I go home now, Matt?)



Blimey! Just what is going on here? Don't ask me who's got the ball, I'm only the quarterback!



Your mission, Jim, should you decide to accept it, is to choose one of these 'plays' in about nine seconds, and memorise what on earth is supposed to happen when it's put into practice!!



But before you do that though you're going to have to choose between running plays and passing plays (whatever they are). Hmm. I'm stuck.

damaged robots not performing so well, but none of this is really apparent on the Speccy because of the jerky gameplay. Still, all this having been said, after I'd persevered I was actually able to make some progress! *(Gasp! Ed)* Here's Davey's trusty tip – instead of throwing the ball away as soon as you get it (like I used to do when we played rugby at school), you should make the receiver hold onto it for a bit until your players are in the right place to catch the pass.

Anyway, *Cyberball* sounded like a great idea for a game, but I'm afraid that Domark could well have been a trifle over-ambitious with the Speccy version. With the memory limitation, of course, the teams are both monochrome (although your opponents' area is a bit darker), and the gameplay is a tad on the slow side. I suppose it's quite a specialist game. I mean even if you like the idea of small monochrome robots bashing each other, you still need to get to grips with the rules of American footie!

finalverdict

80 60 40 20

LIFE EXPECTANCY	GRAPHICS	ADDICTIVENESS
70°	65°	70°

DIAGNOSIS

Nice idea but far too ambitious for the humble Spec. Die-hard fans could get some fun out of it.

INSTANT APPEAL 64°

70°

JOYSTICK JUGGLERS

Since this issue has a sort of 'Ancient Japanese' feel to it, we thought we'd quiz our Jugglers a bit on the oriental scene. Do any of them speak Japanese? Have any of them ever been there? Um, do any of them want to go? Well, let's find out, shall we?

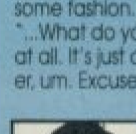


Duncan MacDonald "I find Japanese policing methods very interesting actually." Blimey! We never figured you'd be one to take any great interest in 'the rozzers', Dunc! Tell us more! "I like their very 'softly softly' community policing methods. Every copper makes sure he knows everyone on his patch and goes round to visit them all the time for tea. And what's more, when they go in your house they take off their shoes as a sign of courtesy! You wouldn't find that here – but that's probably because it'd take a British copper about half an hour to get out of his Doc Martens." Hmm, good point. "Yes, that's why the Japanese police all wear carpet slippers on duty." (Are you sure about this?)

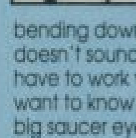


Matt Bielby "Mmmm, I really like Japanese food! Sushi, especially. I love it! Love it love it love it. They have this really really (really) weird cooking method that actually leaves the fish stone cold and sort of wet-looking, even though it's been cooked, and then they wrap it in leaves and you eat it with your fingers. I wish I knew how they did it."

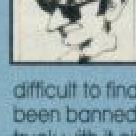
Actually, um, we think we know the secret of that particular 'cooking' method. "Oh really? Brilliant! I've been searching it out for ages, but none of my cook books seemed to have it in. Do they sort of boil it then, or is it grilled or what?" No, actually, it's a lot simpler than that. "Of course! I knew it! It's got to be sort of baked in some fashion. It's obvious!" It's even more obvious than that, actually. Um, it's raw. "...What do you mean... raw? You mean raw-raw?!" 'Fraid so. It's not actually cooked at all. It's just a dead fish, that's all, wrapped up in leaves to make it look 'nice'. "Um, I, er, um. Excuse me, I've just come over all funny inside."



Kati Hamza With a name like that you almost sound a bit Japanese, don't you, Kati? "Well, I'm not." No. Um, ah, is there anything that especially appeals to you about Japanese culture then? "Yes, the comics! They're great – have you seen them?" Uh, no. "They're about 6,000 pages long like telephone directories and yet hardly anything happens in them! There'll be about ten pages about a bloke bending down, tying his shoe lace, then getting back up again! Brilliant!" Erm, it doesn't sound so brilliant to us. "And the other thing is they start at the back and you have to work your way to the front. Excellent!" Erm, right, sounds 'great'. "And do you want to know what the best bit is?" We can hardly wait. "Everybody's got these great big saucer eyes on them, no matter who they are. They're so cute – they all look like Marine Boy!"



David Wilson "Guess what my favourite thing is about Japan. Go on, guess!" Oh, we don't know. What is it? "Kareoke bars!!" Oh no, we knew you'd say that! That's one of those ridiculous places where all the customers get up and have a sing-song, isn't it? "That's right! They're brilliant! (Whispers.) It's really funny you know, but ever since my reasonably successful song *Hold My Hand...* I've been finding it difficult to find anywhere where I can freely express myself vocally, you know. I've been banned from singing in the office now, and most public places won't have any truck with it either. My flatmates have even banned me humming along in the bath! So kareoke bars have really proved to be a godsend, a place where they don't just allow me to give free reign to my vocal talents, they positively encourage it!" Let's just hope he sticks to them, eh, Spec-chums?



Jonathan Davies "Um, er, um, can't think of anything really." Oh, come on, Jonathan, play the game! "No, it's, erm, it's just I'm finding it hard to concentrate at the moment. I've not been getting much sleep, you see." Oh no, why's that? "Well... nah, you'll laugh." No, we won't. Go on. "Well, at night, when I'm lying in bed, the central heating comes on and makes all these gurgling noises, and it's quite scarey." Oh, that happens in lots of houses – it's nothing to worry about. "No, no! You don't understand! You see, the pipes used to go 'gurgle, gurgle sploosh' sort of thing, which was fine, but now, well, it's more of a 'snort, snort' sort of noise, with the occasional 'oink' thrown in. And you know what that means, don't you? It's the g-g-ghost of Farty trying to contact me from beyond the grave!!" Er... blimey.

90° - 100° Getting up to fever temperature! Miss a game that's this red-hot and you'll get the blues – we guarantee it! Any game that rates an overall score of 90 or above gets the esteemed *YS* Megagame rating! It's a happening piece of software!

80° - 89° PDG! (ie Pretty Damn Good!) A game well worth digging into the old dosh bucket for!

70° - 79° A very enjoyable game, but might not be of lasting appeal to everybody.

60° - 69° A few niggles. Lacking in certain areas. Think before you buy!

50° - 59° Pretty average. Very average in fact. Actually, it's a bit crap.

40° - 49° Um, below average (believe it or not).

30° - 39° So sickly it's due to hospitalised!

20° - 29° Very poorly indeed.

10° - 19° Critical – not expected to last the night.

0° - 9° Clinically dead.

E-MOTION



US Gold /£10.99 cass

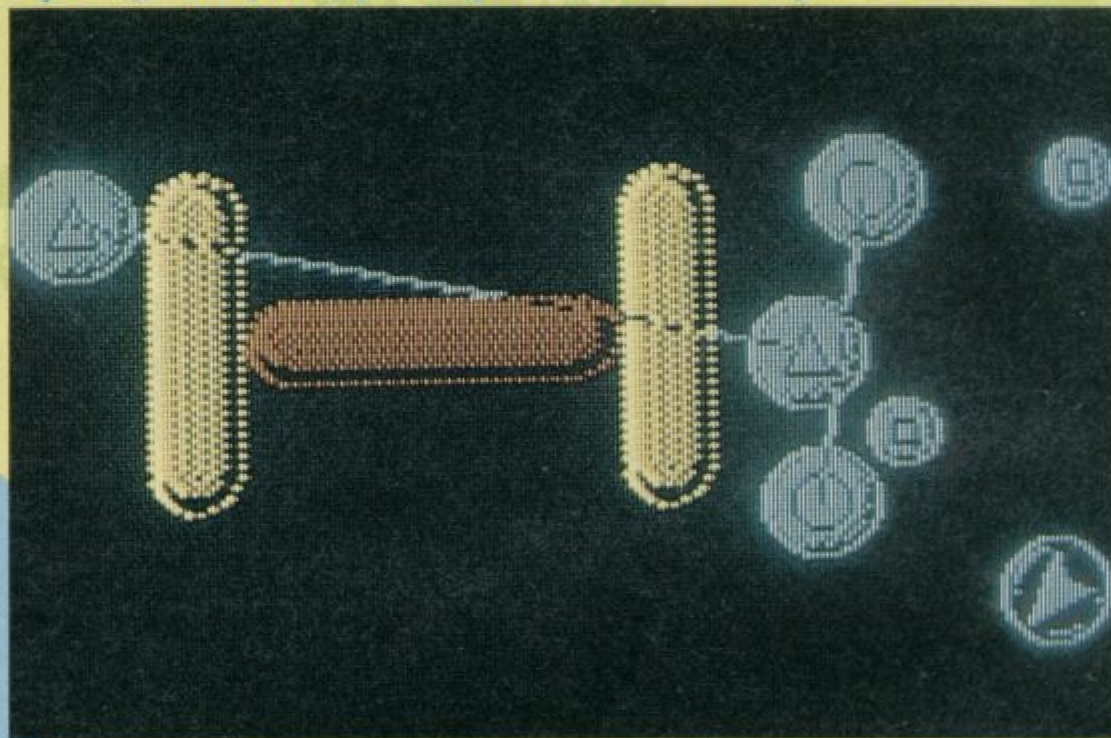


Kati Once upon a time (well, during that grey and rather murky decade they call the '70s actually) a horrible little factory somewhere began producing some equally horrible little lamps. These lamps were filled with mobile oil bubbles which floated in a bright orange solution of hideous greasy gloop, and they quickly became the most ultra-hip 'sitting room' accesory of the period. They were foul, they really were.

Well, *E-Motion* is nothing like that. (Well, okay, they've both got a load of floating spherical objects but nothing else.) In fact, *E-Motion* isn't really like any other game I've ever seen so describing the blooming thing might prove a tad difficult. Oh well, here goes.

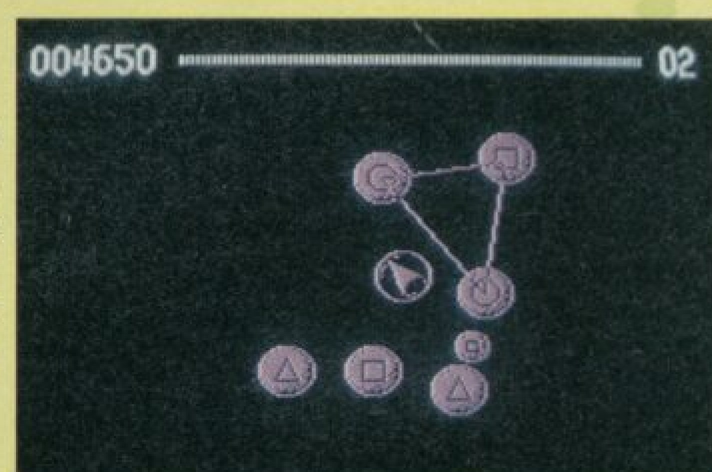
(Long pause.) Imagine a big black space. Now put in a few round balls inscribed with different geometrical shapes and add a funny round little geezer as a control pod. Then link them together with funny string things *(A bit like* Klackers *actually. Ed)*. A doddle so far. Okay, here's the tricky bit. The little round control pod has to zoom around the black screen bumping and shoving identical balls into one another. "Why?" I hear you ask. Because if it doesn't manage it in time the balls start flashing like crazy and explode, zapping all the pod's energy and leaving you minus one life.

And there's more. For starters, the pod suffers from inertia so unless you're a bit of a whizz-kid with the old twizzle-stick you're much more likely to go sailing straight past your target (whizz) and swearing (%*@!) than actually hitting the er... balls. Secondly, if two different spheres collide by accident (and this tends to happen rather a lot at first) they generate a cute little baby ball. These turn into bigger pubescent balls after a few seconds but if you get them while they're small they pop a bit extra onto your energy bar. Thirdly, the screen actually wraps around itself so the snappiest route from ball to ball isn't always the most obvious one. For example, if you want to get a sphere on the left over to the right, it might actually be quicker to shove it off the left-hand side of the screen (a bit like *Asteroids* actually). Clever, eh?



It's the first screen and I'm not doing too well. I've already created a couple of extra balls, and that weird h-shaped doofer's getting in the way too. Drat.

And there's even more! In the interests of some really major trickiness, those cheeky chappies at US Gold have conjured up loads of extras, like impassable barriers and natty little pick-up pills which have a sort of absorbent effect. Instead of going round bashing the balls you just kind of suck them up. And even more confusing are the pieces of elastic. These connect some of the balls and both the control pods to each other in two-player mode. Pulling one end usually results in the other sproinging like crazy all around the screen, making a general pig's ear of the whole thing.



Now, if I can just run over that smaller ball before it grows any bigger, then get the pair in the triangle to touch, I'll be laughing...

It all adds up to an extremely spanky little puzzler with a multitude of levels and some very spiffy game design. There's not much to comment on in the way of sound or graphics but the crucial thing is the physics and, by crikey, have they got it right. The spheres move exactly like they should, especially when they're tied to the 'rubber bands', and the collision detection is absolutely on the ball. Unfortunately, there is one irritating tendency in that it plays a snip too s-l-o-o-o-w when there are lots of sprites about, but that's not too much of a handicap.

There are some people who wouldn't like a puzzle game if it jumped up and bit them on the bottom.



Yikes! It's the two-player game and I'm tied to my partner and some other balls with a piece of knicker elastic. Look at all those new ones I've managed to create over there on the right! (Not doing too well, am I?)

E-Motion won't be everybody's mug of steaming Rosie Lee but with so much variety and manic action this is an excellent excuse to give your lil' ol' trigger finger a hard-earned rest.

Don't be a turkey – go check it out.

finalverdict

LIFE EXPECTANCY	GRAPHICS	ADDICTIVENESS
87°	50°	80°

DIAGNOSIS

A triffic load of balls which tests your mental and your manual skills. A real love it or hate it game.

INSTANT APPEAL 77°

80 60 40 20

80°

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YS–4

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Letters



WRITE TO THE ED, *YS*, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH BA1 2AP.

Star letter winners receive three games! All letters win a YS badge.

I'm in quite a good mood this month, believe it or not. Yes, the air down here in Bath is really rather calming – and our shed's been done up a bit. There's a skylight in the roof now, so the warm Spring air can sort of waft through (or it would if we could get the skylight open). Anyway, I suppose I'd better deal with you lot. Off we go then...

KEYBOARD CAPERS

I have been buying (and reading) *YS* for two to three years now – it's incredible! I've got a subscription and I would strongly recommend everyone to get one. But I would like to know one thing – do you playtest the games on the Speccy keys? It looks like it to me. In the March issue, in the review of *Garfield*, Jackie said "left-right pummelling the keyboard", not "joystick waggling". Why? Can't you afford joysticks, or do you just not like them?

Robert Porter
Halton, Lancs

PS Stop giving us northerners hassle – our arcades are only 10p. So shut up.

We've got nothing against joysticks, it's just that there isn't a model available small enough for Jackie – she has to use the keyboard (and even then we have to sellotape planks of wood to her arms to give them added weight so she presses the keys firmly). There's no way around it. And as for giving northerners hassle, what do you expect? Serves you right for living at the crap end of the country. **Ed.**

DILLON OF DOCK GREEN

I was reading *Joystick Jugglers* in ish 51 when I caught a glimpse of a new bloke called Tony Dillon. The name sounded familiar, and so did his mug. Reading through my friend's copy of, er, 'wotsit' I spotted his name again and the thought struck me that they might be one and the same. Are they the same? And if they are, has Tony seen the light and decided to work for the best Speccy mag this side of the solar system? I'd like to know.

Jeremy Lee
Slade Green, Kent

Yes, he is one and the same. I let him do some stuff for us out of the kindness of my heart (you know how kind I am by now, I'm sure). Unfortunately, coming from the 'other' camp (as he does) he was a bit crap. **Ed.**

DEAD RENEGADE

Firstly I'd like to congratulate you on reaching the big 50. Did you know you shared your 50th issue with my goldfish's 50th birthday? It's true. For its birthday I bought it one of those multi-coloured Cruiser Joysticks. When it saw its pressie it had a heart attack and died. I'm going to miss old Renegade. We enjoyed so many computer games together, like *Bubble Bobble* and *Operation Thunderbolt*.

Since he's gone nothing's gone right. Firstly during a drama lesson, when we weren't wearing any shoes or socks, someone sat down on their chair – and one of its legs was on my toe. It's now broken (my toe, that is). Secondly, the Saturday after the toe episode, I stood up under an open cupboard and lost a chunk of my eyebrow. Moan moan moan.

Emma Edwards
Harlow, Essex

As well as a badge, I'm going to send you a replacement goldfish. He's called Arnold and is, as I was assured by the assistant in the pet shop, an extremely 'lucky' fish. I'll just squeeze him into the Jiffy bag. (Heave, grunt.) There. Now to staple it closed. (Oh no! Arnold) *Righto, onto the 'Post Out' pile with it. Arnold should be with you in a few days.* **Ed.**

THE ART OF DECEPTION

In the August '89 issue of your illustrious organ you published a letter written by my father, who was pretending to be me – he'd boasted that he could get a letter published using my name, so I called his bluff.

In your reply, also published in that issue *(Obviously. Ed)*, you told him/me that he/we couldn't have your Spectrum manual and that he/we/me would "have to make do with a badge". Well, I/me have been waiting expectantly ever since. Give us a break. Give us/me/him a badge!

Keith Ramsay
Hartshill, Stoke-on-Trent

How do I know that you're not your dad pretending to be you again? That's the trouble with deception – you never know where it ends. Still, never mind, I've got TWO spanky badges in my hand and I'm about to drop them into an envelope for you. (Unless of course I'm pretending to – in which case I haven't got two badges in my hand which I'm not about to drop into an envelope. You'll have to wait and see.) **Ed.**

DOODLE BUGS

Winner of the *YS* Doodlebugs bit this month is **Andrew Perryman** from Kinross in Scotland, who sent in this terrifying portrait of Jonathan Davies' old sparring partner Farty The Warthog. We asked JD if it was an accurate representation of the beast but he declined on the grounds that his psychiatrist thought it unwise.

Fancy yourself as a bit of a dandy doodler? Then show us the proof! Send your piccies, in black ink only please, to Doodlebugs, *YS*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2AP. And remember, there's a free game to be won for every pic we print!



HE'S DISGUSTED

I am not writing to you with any game cheats or to say how wonderful your mag is. I am writing to tell you what I think about it.

It is disgraceful, and it is shocking to know that it is the number one Sinclair magazine. You seem to delight in putting in swear-words, dirty articles, horrible pictures, sarcasm and reviews of evil games plus demos of dreadful rubbish like *Altered Beast* (I think this is the most disgusting and evil game I have ever seen). Computing is an art and a science, not an excuse for disgraceful material to be published. Please stop – you are blackening the name of Sinclair.

Sam Jeffreys
Poole, Dorset

Oh. Tell you what I'll do. I'll drop the swear-words, innuendo, articles, horrible pictures, sarcasm and all game reviews. And I'll rename the mag Bunty. Actually I'll go further than that. I'm going to close the magazine down totally. I'm going to sell up and move to Canada, where I'm going to live in the forest (like they do in Disney films) and make friends with all the animals there. I'll have a pet racoon called Ricky or something. Together we'll ward off an attacking grizzly bear. It's going to be brilliant. **Ed.**

VICIOUS SWEDE

Oh God! No! Now you're all dead meat! Especially the %@$π@^* on the Ed's chair. Yeah, you heard me! The %@$π@^* on the Ed's chair! Last time I wrote to your mag (the best mag in the galaxy) I got my letter printed, but I didn't get my *YS* badge! Now I'm really Δ*$$%ß off! And I have followed your last advice, and have a big doctor bill for my broken collar bone! Maybe I'm coming to England this summer to visit London (and *YS* of course). Then the Ed's head will be rolling on the street like a football in a soccer game. But you can avoid this one way and one way only! That way is by sending me my *YS* badge and print my letter now!

Kent Carlsson
Helsingborg, Sweden

PS If you're bored ignore this letter.

God, I'm so incredibly bored. Yawn! Er, I think I'll make a little tower out of some matches. No, that's boring as well. I know – I'll have a kip instead. Zzzzzz. **Ed.**

PLUCKY PENSIONER

I went round my mate's house to play *Chase HQ* because he couldn't get past Stage One and asked me to try. Well, what can I say? I did it first go. I liked the game so much I decided to get a copy, so jingle jangle, scrunch scrunch, I got out my dosh and went out to buy it. A couple of weeks later I'd completed it with a score of 11630065. Later on I showed it to my granny (who's 70) and she also loved it. She's very weak-hearted, but still played it all day while I was at school and then she completed it with a score of 11451293. *Chase HQ* is a mega-fab game that I would recommend to any pensioner.

Jack Gallagher
Langley, Slough

There wouldn't be much point recommending it to my great uncle Basil (a pensioner of 82). He suffers from senile dementia, you see, and doesn't really know where he is most of the time. Give him a joystick and sit him in front of a Speccy and he'd probably think he was at the greengrocers or in the middle of the Battle of the Ardennes (or something). **Ed.**

DECISIONS DECISIONS

I'm 14 and this year I have to choose the subjects which will be my GCSE exams. For example, if I choose Computer Studies it will become a GCSE exam when I'm in the fifth year. So the subjects I choose this year will be on my timetable next year. What I want to know is what qualifications do you need to become a journalist working in computer mags? My dad says you have to be a moron, but I think I'd value your opinion more.

Martin Betts
Norwich, Norfolk

Oh dear. I don't know how to break this to you, but your dad was right. **Ed.**

PEE SEA SHOW

I've got a bit of a complaint about you lot. Now it's all very well having these PC and Games Shows every once in a while, but why are they always in the London area? How about having one up in the north-east of England for a change? Or even better, why not have a *YS* Roadshow? I am sure this would please a lot of people who just can't afford the time or money to trek all the way down south and all the way back again. I hope this seems like a good idea to you – and if not, well, it was worth the try, wasn't it?

Ken Pedelty
Glebe, Washington

Yes it was. And you'll be pleased to know that we're even thinking of taking you up on that YS Roadshow idea – the trouble is, where would be fair for everybody? Tell you what I'll do, I'll close my eyes and stick a pin in the UK page of the YS atlas for a random location. Here goes. Er, oh. I'm afraid the YS Roadshow is going to take place in the North Sea, half way between Wick and the Shetland Islands. **Ed.**

DIAL 999

I was reading your brill mag when I came across a truly horrific picture of the all-time superstar Postman Pat and his lovable cat Jess being attacked by an extremely large

STAR LETTER

BLIMEY – IT'S FROM RUMANIA

Honoured Sir,
First of all I must introduce myself – my name is Antal Burjon, and I am a 20 years old boy. I live in Rumania, the country of enormous changes in the last few months. In fact these changes determinates me to write you in the following problem.

For a few years I am interested in finding out as much as possible about home computers and, generally, about computer sciences. I possess my own wonderful Spectrum +128K, and I'd like to turn to a bigger machine. As there is no documentation and programs for other than Spectrum compatible computers – at least yet – I was forced to search for a +3 Spectrum. In vain. The old dictatorial government, wishing its own people not to think, has discouraged in all possible ways the entrance of the micros in the 'little red empire'. As I have got no millionaire aunt or uncle in the States, and there are no +3s in this country, then my dreams seem to be only... dreams. I decided to write to you when I saw the constant and substantial help given by your people for us. Please try to solve my problem sending me any piece of information of Spectrum range of micros, or programs, or anything else. Many many thanks, wishing you – and in fact for both of us – a happy new year, a happy new Europe.

Burján Antal
Str Cluj No 6, SC B Apt 30
3125 Medias Jud Sibiu,
Rumania

What I've done is printed your full address. That way Spec-chums throughout the world will read your request and write to you with information and (judging by the average month's mail stacked up in the YS office) numerous 'gifts' of jam, sweets, two pence and one pence pieces and even little plastic figurines taken from the bottom of Corn Flakes packets. Oh, and a happy new Europe to you too! **Ed.**

WONDERFUL WORLD OF SPECCY

Odd letters from around the world. This month a rather odd dig at Michael Jackson from Malta and a ditty from one of Beelzebub's little helpers who lives in our favourite clog-making land – the land of the clog. (Erm, Holland.)

WACKO JACKO

From the poem below you can see that I am not a Michael Jackson fan, and I am sure that there are others like me, and this poem is dedicated to them.

Michael Jackson thinks he's cool,
But to me he's just a fool.
In his mouth was a silver spoon,
The day that he was born.

He thinks he's a Moonwalker,
I think he's just a big talker.
Building a sanctuary for Liz,
Who the hell does he think he is?

Simon Freedman
Sliema, Malta

Why pull your punches? Here's my version of your poem...

Wacko Jacko's barking mad,
Say the newspapers of the gutter,
And for once in their lives they've got it right –
He's a total and absolute nutter.
Ed.

GREETINGS FROM HELL

I'm gonna tell you about my problem whether you like it or not! I own a Speccy 128K and I own almost no games. This because you can't buy Speccy games in the Netherlands anymore. So I went Satan and asked him what to do, and he said "Buy a Commie 64 – enough games available." So I bought a Commie 64 and own some games now. But I still like my Speccy, so maybe you can save this poor chap by giving him the Star Letter so he can get some software for his lovely Speccy.

Be a God and save me from Satan.

Yours beggingly
Serge Royinga
Sneek
Netherlands

Too late, my little Mephistophilean ship-mate – you've already sold your soul. Write back and convince me that you're no longer in league with the dastardly Dark Lord and I may relent. Until then a badge will have to do! **Ed.**

Trainspotter Award



BUD'S GRAN'S HIS MUM

I claim a Trainspotter Award for noticing a mistake in the February issue. At the top of the Madam Pico section you explain that she is on holiday and so her grandson Bud is taking her place. But in Bud's reply he says that his *mum* is on holiday at the moment. He can't be her grandson and son!
D Bickford
Maldon
Essex

Bud was adopted by Madam Pico at an early age. Madam Pico's husband was then killed in an accident in a custard factory. Madam Pico's mother (Bud's grandmother) then passed away. Madam Pico's mother's husband (Eric) was not Madam Pico's real father – he was her stepfather. Madam Pico and Eric later fell in love while holidaying in Cleethorpes, and were eventually married. This makes Eric Bud's grandfather and Madam Pico herself both Bud's mother and his grandmother. No? Oh, alright – you can have a Trainspotter then. **Ed.**

IT RHYMES!

Well golly gosh and crikey dick,
You really are incredibly thick,
Not three mistakes, not one but two,
Have noticeably been done by you!
The first was done by Dr B
Which in ish 46 you will see
That an *R-Type* hint on page 49
Is printed for the second time.
The first (just two of them, no more)
Was on page 36 of ish 44.
The other mistake was in the Trainspotter part
Where you didn't show too much art
In saying a front cover was just a reflection
But can you not see the simple connection
Between what hand drive the car really was
And the basic scientific laws?
Namely if one part is back to front
Then you'd also have to shunt
Around the "Scoop 1" number plate
Which front-to-back wouldn't look too great!
So for pointing out both these errors
I'd like a Trainspotter from you terrors.
Alistair 'Robert Burns' Morrison
Banff, Scotland

In the country of Ciskei, the front number plates are required by law to read in mirror-image form (like the word 'AMBULANCE' on the front of, er, ambulances). So I think you can guess where I'm going to say the front cover in question was set. That's right – Ciskei. As for the R-Type blunder. Um. Okay – you've got yourself a Trainspotter! **Ed.**

Cybernoid. I want you to therefore apologise immediately to the Postman Pat Fan Club (of which I am a fully-fledged member). I was so scared by this picture that I had to call the fire brigade.
Bill Smith
Blackpool, Lancs

Yes, good thinking. Whenever I get really scared I always call the fire brigade too. I remember they once dragged me kicking and screaming from behind the sofa after an episode of Dr Who. If it wasn't for these brave fighters of fire and rescuers of cats stuck in trees I might've been there to this very day. Three cheers for firemen everywhere. **Ed.**

OUT OF HIS TREE

Please can you help me? I am trying to find out if there is a program written for the Sinclair Spectrum that will store/update my 'family tree'? I currently use a card index. I would be grateful if you could let me know of any such program and where I might be able to obtain it.
GL Brown
Woking, Surrey

Haven't a clue I'm afraid. What I have done though is get Duncan to write a BASIC program for you...

```
10 INPUT A$
20 BEEP 1,30: PRINT "That item is now saved permanently to memory. Input your next listing"
30 GOTO 10
```

Hope it helps. **Ed.**

WIPE 'EM CLEAN

I've got a serious problem with my +3. It's really weird. It keeps on wiping my disks – even when they're write-protected! What's even funnier is that it won't load CodeMasters games. (It's not my tape recorder 'cos I've got through three.)
Richard Bain
Yarm, Cleveland

At the risk of stating the obvious I'd say that you are actually quite fortunate. Our office +3 has no problems loading in CodeMasters games. Want to swop? **Ed.**

MAN FROM THE PERU

Today I was playing my new games with my Speccy and my best friend (a Commodore user) says "If your games could have more colours, they would be better than I have seen in any computer." So what do you have to say, R Richards?

By the way, I will travel to your country soon, so can you give me some addresses in Croydon, Bournemouth and London?
José Luis Pastor
Lima, Peru

Here are some addresses for you – 88 Oval Road, Croydon; 12 Frith Street, Bournemouth and 88b Arcacia Avenue, London. **Ed.**

YAWN

After reading your *Rage Hard* review on printers, I was persuaded to buy a Star LC 10 colour printer. I want to use this with a Speccy+ 48K, but I don't have a colour screen dump program to print out pictures. Please could you print this so you or anyone can tell me where to buy them. Thanks.
Anthony Daniels
Woodbridge, Suffolk
PS Sorry it's a boring letter.

Yes, it's the most boring letter I've seen for ages – you ought to be ashamed of yourself. **Ed.**

SMALL PRINT

Why wasn't a Portuguese letter have been yet a Star Letter? (Just kidding.)
José Manuel Pinho Moura Matos Azevedo, Matosimhos, Portugal
Because there's never enough room for Portuguese names on the Star Letter Certificate. (Just kidding.) **Ed.**

Here are my tips for getting a whole letter printed...
Dominic Rackstraw
Bracknell, Berkshire
And they almost worked. **Ed.**

Help me! I've just found out I'm six years' pregnant!
David 'Crumbs' Maher
Wactham Abbey, Essex
That's nothing. Did you know the gestation period of the Galapagus turtle is nine years? **Ed.**

Please mention Paul Holmes or else he will be devastated (he's mentally insecure).
Chris Jordan
Holt, Wilts
Paul Holmes is mentally insecure. **Ed.**

I intend to (and will) take over Small Print.
The Lizard Of Oz
Glasgow
You haven't done particularly well this month. **Ed.**

BUD PICO'S HOW TO DO IT!



She's still missing.

Dear Mr Pico,
I am writing to you as Head of the Monopolies Commission following complaints that you are guilty of biased and prejudicial reference to Rice Krispies. It is not only the constant reference to this cereal so much as your mention of only one brand, namely Kelloggs Rice Krispies. I look forward to reading your explanation on this matter.
Regards,
The Head of the Monopolies Commission

Blimey! Er... I'm not sure what you mean. Erm... I have no financial interest in the welfare of the rather excellent and nutritionally-balanced Kelloggs Rice Krispies at all. Uh... Just to prove this here's a reader's tip...

Dear Mr Pico
I read with interest your enquiry if any of your readers have cereal tips. I am a collector of porcelain and as I have many valuable pieces to store safely I usually pack my delicate treasures into a cardboard box filled with Slater's Puffy Rice. It really is an ideal medium for the safe storage of delicate heirlooms. I have tried using the Kellogg's variety but find that they are not as impact-resisitant as the Slater's brand.
Yours,
Reg Slater (no relation)

Er, thanks for that tip, Mr Slater. I suspect, however, that you're motives for writing to me may not have been entirely 'above board' – your letter was typed on Slater's Breakfast Products stationary! No 'Bud Pico Taught Me How To Do It' badge for you, I'm afraid!
Cheers,
Bud

Dear Mr Pico,
I have recently earned my cookery badge at Brownies for making Chocolate Rice Krispie cakes. Is this a new 'breakfast cereal tip'?
Love,
Samantha, Pixie Six (aged seven)

Dear Samantha
They sound like a most delicious snack!! Not only have you earned yourself a Brownie cookery badge, but a 'Bud Pico Taught Me How To Do It' badge as well! (I hope Brown Owl lets you wear it on your uniform!)
Cheers,
Bud



BRITAIN'S BIGGEST SELLING SPORTS HIT
... IS ABOUT TO HIT THE WORLD ...
FOOTBALL MANAGER
World Cup Edition
1990
In 1982, Kevin Toms wrote Football Manager, six years (and half a million copies sold) later, Kevin went one better and produced Football Manager 2. A response to the ideas of thousands and thousands of Football Manager fans for an improved game. Football Manager 2 has, like its ancestor, proved a stunning success, a game with appeal that will last for years, more than satisfying old fans but creating new ones.
With the success of Football Manager 2, have come more suggestions for an even better game. Kevin has responded with "Football Manager: World Cup Edition", a game that takes management into the international arena, with all the thrills of world cup competition, a game that takes the unique components of its two ancestors and radically improves them a game that will better the best.
Kevin Toms.
Free
WORLD CUP EDITION WALL CHART WITH EVERY GAME.
Keep up to date during the World Cup this summer with your own special Football Manager Wall Chart.
WIN FABULOUS PRIZES IN OUR WORLD CUP COMPETITION
Prizes include: • Your picture with Kevin Toms on the packaging of Football Manager 3. • Holiday Tickets of your choice. • Signed Footballs.
Available soon on:-
Spectrum 48/128K Tape £9.99
Spectrum +3 Disk £14.99
CBM 64/128 Tape £9.99
CBM 64/128 Disk £14.99
Amstrad CPC Tape £9.99
Amstrad CPC Disk £14.99
MSX £9.99
Atari ST £19.99 Amiga £19.99
PC 5¼" £19.99 PC 3½" £19.99
Addictive
LIVE THAT DREAM
"I have been studying football tactics and interviewing professional managers. This new game will bring you the results – more tactical management, more realism, and more playability. I've done my best to give you the most entertaining game possible."
Good Luck
Prism Leisure Corporation Plc, Unit 1, Baird Road, Enfield, Middlesex EN1 1SJ.

THE B

Beat-'em-ups, eh? There've been oodles of them gracing the Speccy over the years, haven't there? So many in fact that it's easy-peasy to get your *Exploding Fists* mixed up with your *International Karates* and end up with absolutely no idea where you are. But not any more, 'cos here's *Jonathan Davies* with the *Your Sinclair* Definitive Guide To Beat 'Em-Ups. Hurrah! Or should that be "Hai-arrgh!"?



ILLUSTRATION BY JIM McCARTHY

YS GUIDE TO BEAT-'EM-UPS

Before we start, let's get one thing straight – beat-'em-ups are not boring, and if you think they are then you've got it all wrong. On the contrary, they're jolly interesting. And, rather than all being exactly the same, they're highly individual affairs, each with their own subtleties and nuances. To assume otherwise exhibits a total ignorance of the creativity and skill that go into making what has become one of the stalwarts of the computer games industry.

So what constitutes a 'beat-'em-up'? Obviously, the beating up of one or more characters is an essential part of the gameplay. Whether this is done with one's hands or a weapon depends on the game. Purists tend to frown upon the use of shurikens, big sticks and other instruments, but it's a sad fact that in these days you're unlikely to rescue your princess without some sort of mechanical assistance. The setting is also important. The summit of Mount Yukahomo is ideal, or perhaps the imperial palace of the Dragon Master, but an oriental atmosphere is a definite must.

In its traditional form the beat-'em-up takes place on a single screen, with your opponents tackling you one at a time. Variations, however, include the scrolling beat-'em-up (with the bonus of tackling two or more adversaries at once) and the full scale flip-screen, multi-level version with add-on weapons, puzzles to solve and an embossment of up to three initials. Whichever incarnation it appears in, a beat-'em-up is not to be taken lightly. A sharp eye, lightning reflexes and an elephantine memory (for learning all those moves) are needed, along with the finest joystick available.

THE FIRST EVER BEAT-'EM-UP

"That's easy," you exclaim. "*Way Of The Exploding Fist*!" But you'd be wrong. The first-ever beat-'em-up, the father of them all, the seed from which all future offerings stemmed forth, and of which all others are but pale imitations, was none other than *Kung Fu*, from a long-forgotten label called Bug-Byte.

A very primitive construction, it had all the ingredients of the real thing (including tinkly music). Reviewed in ish 11 of *Your Spectrum*, it scored 3/5 (times were hard). The rest, as they say, is, erm... oh, well you know.

COMPLETE YS GUIDE TO BEAT-'EM-UPS

A SELECTION OF HISTORIC BEAT-'EM-UPS

RATINGS

As beat-'em-ups tend to transcend all normal ratings systems, we've adopted a special one for the purpose of this guide. The catagories are as follows...

Inscrutability How well does it capture that all-important oriental feel? New York ghetto settings aren't really on.

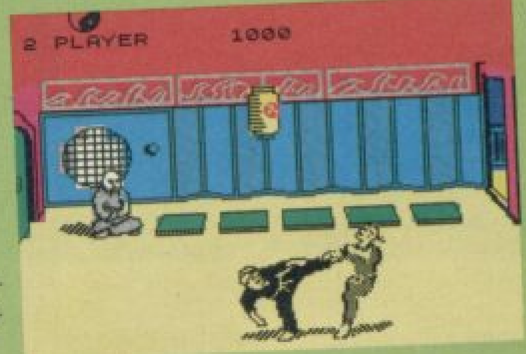
Wince Factor Do you want to curl up and die every time a knee gets planted in your groin, or is it about as traumatic as a merry jig of morris dancing?

Versatility Is it just left, right, up, down and fire, or does every joystick direction do something radically different?

Eastern Promise What does the future hold? Pride of place in your collection or a dusty grave under the bed?

Way Of The Exploding Fist Melbourne House

The game that launched a thousand others. Can it really be 38 years old already? Known simply as *Fist* to its millions of fans, this laid the foundations for all that were to follow, and without doubt remains the most famous beat-'em-up of all time.



Classic moves brought to us in *Fist* for the first time were the unsporting but very rewarding punch-in-the-stomach, the boot-in-the-back-of-the-head and the useful kick-in-the-shins. This last move, unfortunately, proves to be the game's downfall (in one-player mode at least), as its repeated use leads to attainment of 10th Dan level within minutes.

Sonically *Fist* remains perfect. Music is restricted to a marvellously irritating tune at the start of each level, and the sound effects still bring tears to the eyes. The graphics, too, are exemplary.

Unfortunately, rather than bow out and watch all the others scrambling onto the bandwagon, Melbourne House decided to hang in there. *Fist*'s follow-up was the forgettable *Fighting Warrior*, then the distinctly average *Fist II*. The final humiliation was *Exploding Fist +*, almost a direct copy of *International Karate +* (qv). Nonetheless, Melbourne House was there first, and can be held entirely responsible for the situation today.



International Karate System 3

While being a shameful copy of *Fist* in most ways, *International Karate* managed to introduce a few novel features. The main one was the



'International' bit, which means that the game is played against a series of backdrops representing various parts of the world. Then there was the speech, which is about as successful as always on the Speccy. And finally the bonus screens. Hmm.

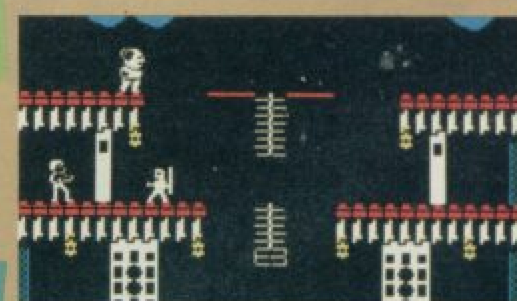
Other than that, *International Karate* is about as standard a beat-'em-up as you're likely to see. It doesn't quite have the slickness of *Fist*, and is definitely lacking when it comes to excrutiating crunches and things, but it makes a reasonable attempt at animation which is something.

International Karate +, the sequel, startled us all with the introduction of a third character.



Bruce Lee US Gold

Bruce Lee comes from roughly the same era as *Fist*, but shows its age rather more severely. Apart from just beating people up, Bruce has to dash about collecting lamps and avoiding being killed by various hazards. The game takes place in a multi-screen fortress, the object being to destroy a wizard on the last screen.



Unfortunately the available moves are restricted to punching and kicking, so it's hardly a proper beat-'em-up at all. The graphics are rubbish, with miniscule characters and clumsy scenery. There's virtually no feeling of pain at all, which is surely essential in a beat-'em-up. And worst of all it's far too easy.

Despite these complaints, *Bruce Lee* is a bit on the historical side (what with being the first collect- and beat-'em-up combined), so one shouldn't be too hard on it.



KNIGHT FORCE

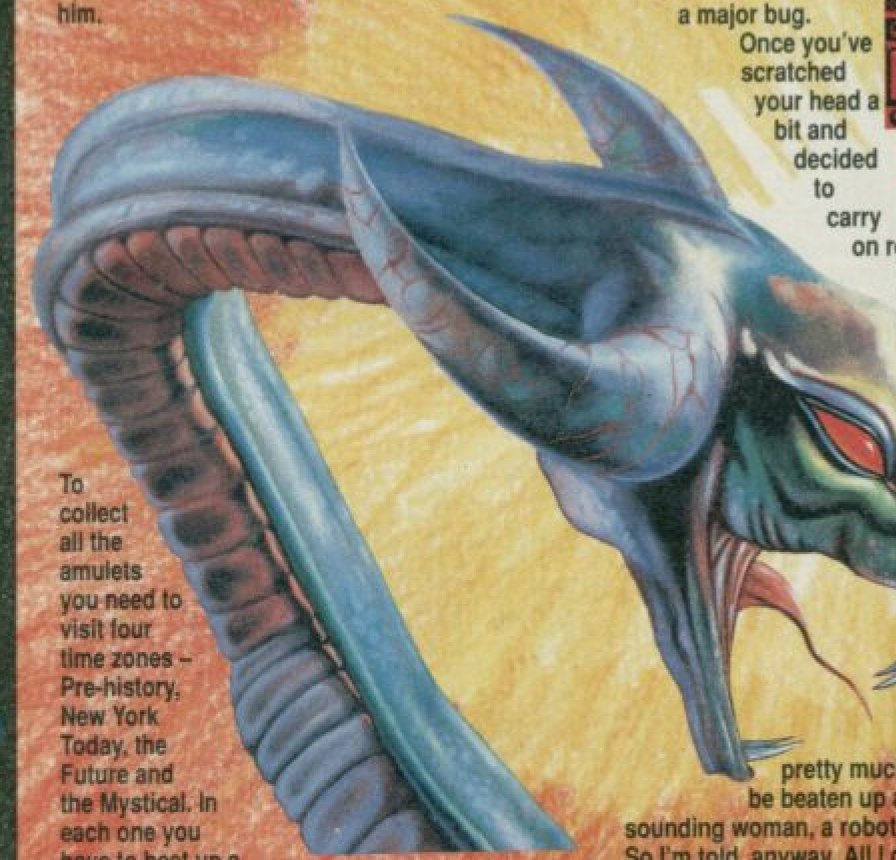
YS GUIDE TO BEAT-'EM-UPS

Titus/£9.99 cass



Jonathan We at *Your Sinclair* realised some time ago that the majority of French programmers are one chip short of a large fries, so it comes as no surprise to find that *Knight Force* is completely weird. Here's the plot...

A princess has been captured (ho hum) by the sorcerer Red Sabbath. He's hoping that Fair Storm (you) will go after her so that he can steal the keys to the Gates of Time and Space from you. Luckily, however, there just happens to be a series of magic amulets lying around Time and Space that will enable you to destroy him.



To collect all the amulets you need to visit four time zones – Pre-history, New York Today, the Future and the Mystical. In each one you have to beat up a lot of people/things and kill a magic bird. According to the instructions, you can tackle the zones in any order by choosing one of four dolmens (prehistoric monuments – I looked it up) from the title screen. The appropriate level should then multiload in. Unfortunately though, whichever key I pressed I always got chucked into the same zone (Future). Rather boring and, as far as I can see, a major bug.

Once you've scratched your head a bit and decided to carry on regardless, you'll find that Fair Storm is a kind of knight, with a sword and everything. Ah-ha, you think, a beat-'em-up! Yes, but a very limited one. You can jump, duck, move left and right and do about five different things with your sword (all of them pretty much the same). Waiting to be beaten up are cavemen, a vicious-sounding woman, a robot and a load of skeletons. So I'm told, anyway. All I could have a crack at was the robot, and some peculiar-looking birds that fly around him. It was terrible. I lasted 30 seconds at the most, waving my sword around to very little effect. And if you do manage to kill the robot another one appears. Oh yeah, and if you accidentally press 'Space' you get sent back to the beginning.



Here's Fair Storm, sword in hand, doing his thing. Lurking somewhere in the scenery is a giant robot that squirts horrible stuff at him.

I don't know quite what to think really. Let's assume, for the sake of the review, that I'm doing something wrong at the start and it is possible to get to all four zones (but I don't think it is). And let's also say for the sake of argument that I'm rubbish at playing games (there could be some truth in that) and that anyone else would be able to actually get somewhere.

The graphics, then, are pretty good (although the sprites tend to get engulfed by the background a bit) but the sound's crap. Even if the playability had been worked out properly, and everything functioned as it should, I can't really imagine anyone going wild about *Knight Force*. There's just not enough there, and what is there has all been done before.

The whole thing's completely bonkers.



[illegible] monochrome backdrops [illegible] and one of the main [illegible] of *Knight Force* – they look good, but sadly our hero [illegible] a little lost in them.



This is the 'dolmens' bit, where you're meant to be able to pick a level and then play it. If only life were so simple.

finalverdict

LIFE EXPECTANCY	GRAPHICS	ADDICTIVENESS
49°	69°	50°

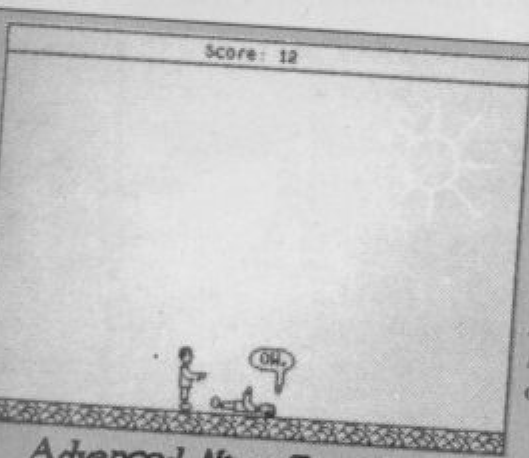
DIAGNOSIS

A bland beat-'em-up with potentially serious technical problems.

INSTANT APPEAL 85°

80 60 40 20

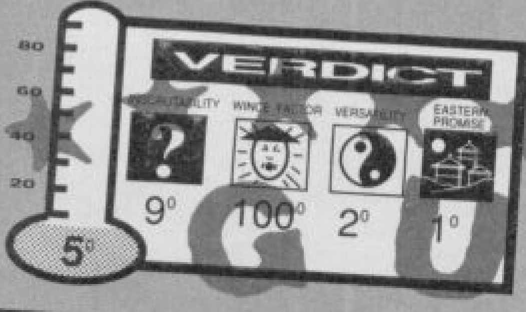
59°



Advanced Ninja Simulator Skintflintsoft

It was inevitable that, given the piles of money everyone else was making out of them, the cheapie labels would have a crack at beat-'em-ups too. And, of course, the results were quite horrendous. With the bare minimum of moves, appalling graphics, dreadful music and complete lack of any fresh ideas, *Advanced Ninja Simulator* is about as typical a budget game as you're likely to get.

And it doesn't matter that they only managed to sell three copies of it. It was also released as *Kung Fu Simulator*, *BMX Ninja Hero*, *All-Terrain Dragon Ninja Combat Simulator* and countless other things. They made piles out of it. Up the revolution!



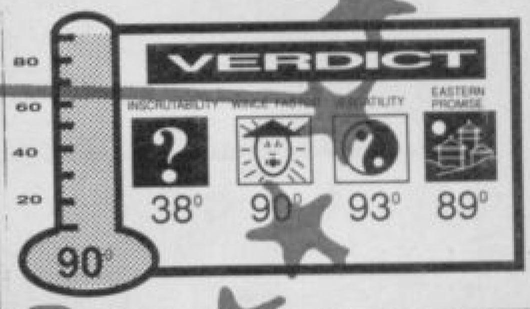
Target Renegade Imagine

Like *Barbarian*, the *Renegade* series avoided the stereotypical martial arts confrontation, and instead went for a modern-day 'street' setting. It still comes out on top.

Target Renegade, like its predecessor *Renegade* and its successor *Renegade III*, was one of the new generation of flip-screen beat-'em-ups with add-on weapons and a wide array of opponents to take on. Some of the best are the motorbike riders and the whip-equipped 'ladies of the night'. The range of moves available is mind-boggling, for example the grab-him-by-the-shoulders-and-knee-him-in-the-groin, and even the toss-him-over-your-shoulder-and-hopefully-off-a-cliff-too.



The playability has been finely tuned, and everything runs at a perfect speed. The difficulty level is also spot on, easing you into it gently and then planting one right where it hurts most.



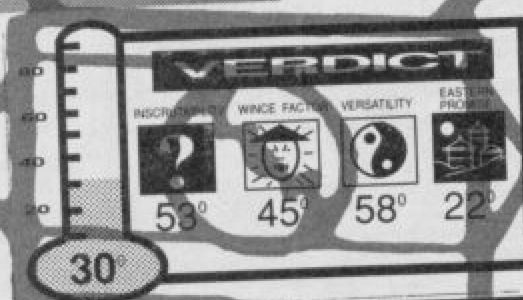
Kung Fu Master US Gold



I'm probably wrong, but I'd say *Kung Fu Master* was the first scrolling beat-'em-up to arrive on the scene, and possibly even the first conversion of an arcade beat-'em-up. It's also absolutely terrible (and no question there).

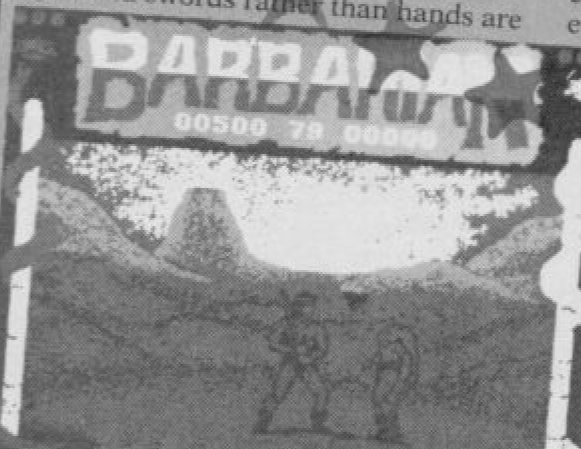
Although the arcade version was very popular, despite its rather restricted gameplay, US Gold really fowled up with the conversion. The graphics are absolutely chronic, with colour-clash everywhere, and the whole thing plays as if it's underwater. There's also the diabolical music to worry about.

However, *Kung Fu Master* does contain a number of milestones. Apart from the scrolling, it also introduced the idea of multiple opponents, some of whom are armed with nasty weapons, and the end-of-level guardians can still cause some hassle.



Barbarian Palace

Now we're talking. Although there isn't a single kimono or droopy moustache in sight, and swords rather than hands are used for carving people up, *Barbarian* is easily the most agonisingly painful game ever released. There's blood literally everywhere, with continuous slaughter the order of the day.



Some of the most memorable moves in beat-'em-up history are featured in *Barbarian*. Not to be missed is the now-legendary spin-round-and-chop-his-head-off manoeuvre, but the head-butt shouldn't be overlooked, and nor should the sylish poke-in-the-eye.

There are plenty of gimmicks too. Like the little bloke who comes on after each game to remove corpses and severed body parts. And the little shrug your warrior gives you when you ignore him for too long.

Yes, *Barbarian* is one of my faves. All it lacks is that essential oriental atmosphere. You could always go for a take-away afterwards of course.

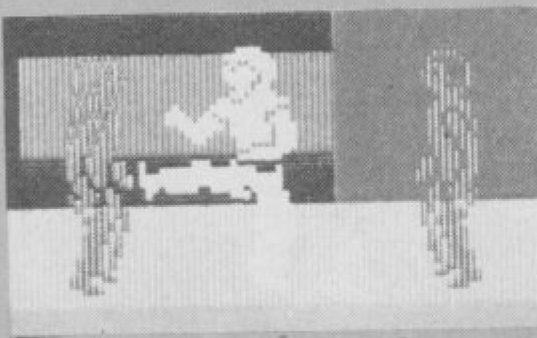


MOVES THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

The Roundhouse
Like so many other great moves, the Roundhouse first came to light in *Fist*. That classic blend of balletic poetry and jaw-breaking power makes it a manoeuvre for all occasions.



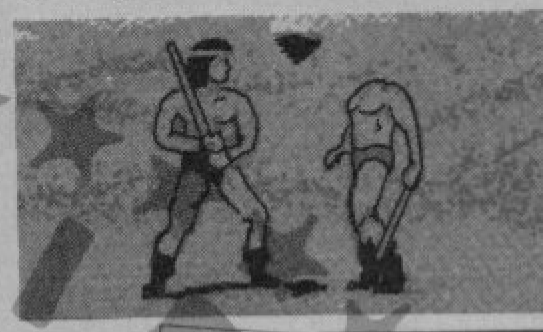
The Sweeping Kick
This is the standard move for success in *Kung Fu Master*, and demonstrates what can be achieved just by waving your leg around in the direction of the foe.



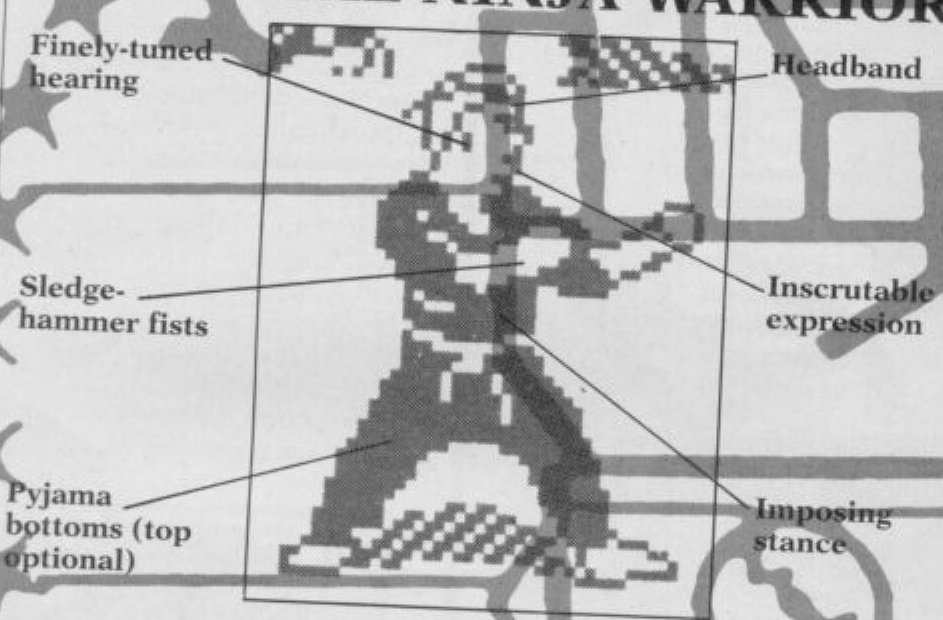
The Pile-On
This move is unique to the *Renegade* series, and can cause some alarm when you find your shoulders gripped by one baddie while another lays into you from the front. However, careful placement of elbows and feet can turn the tables in your favour.



Decapitation
The satisfying result of a cunningly-timed neck-chop during a game of *Barbarian* is the removal of the enemy's head, which can be greatly to your advantage.



A TYPICAL NINJA WARRIOR



SO, YOU WANT TO WRITE A BEAT-'EM-UP?

It's not as hard as it looks actually. Here are a few essential ingredients...
Pain, and lots of it. Agonised grimaces should be accompanied by eye-watering squelching noises when appropriate.
Music, of the tinkly, eastern variety. And why use multi-channels and special effects when you could have authentic, oriental beeping?
Pyjamas are the standard attire, along with the obligatory headband.
Artwork should be of the poorest quality. Anatomical accuracy is not desirable.
Japanese-sounding names often impress. Make one up if you're not fluent, *Uchi Mata* being a classic example of improvisation of this sort.
It shouldn't look like a beat-'em-up, so put it in a nice big black cardboard box.
Sequels always look good (be original – try a '+' rather than a 'II'), but no-one ever buys them of course.
Animation should be avoided where at all possible. Two frames per sequence is the absolute maximum.
Joystick positions should be assigned at random. If they can guess that up, left and fire delivers a low punch, there's no challenge to it.
It should be just like all the rest, so don't get any funny ideas about using your imagination.

EVERY BEAT-'EM-UP EVER RELEASED
(Apart from quite a few probably.)

Avenger Gremlin Graphics
Barbarian Palace
Barbarian II Palace
Big Trouble in Little China Electric Dreams
Bruce Lee US Gold
Double Dragon Melbourne House
Double Dragon II Melbourne House
Dragon Ninja Imagine
Dynamite Dux Activision
Exploding Fist Melbourne House
Fallen Angel Alternative
Fighting Warrior Melbourne House
Fist II Melbourne House
Gladiator Domark
Human Killing Machine US Gold
International Karate System 3
International Karate II System 3
Kai Temple Firebird
Kendo Warrior Byte Back
Kick Boxing Firebird
Knight Force Titus
Knucklebusters Melbourne House
Kung Fu Bug Byte
Kung Fu Knights Top Ten Software
Kung Fu Master US Gold
Hercules Gremlin Graphics
Last Ninja II System 3
Legend Of Kage Imagine
Legend Of The Amazon Women US Gold
Ninja MAD Games
Ninja Hamster CRL
Oriental Hero Firebird
Renegade Imagine
Renegade III Ocean
Saboteur Durell
Saboteur II Durell
Sai Combat Mirrorsoft
Samurai Trilogy Gremlin Graphics
Samurai Warrior Firebird
Shao Lins Road The Edge
Shanghai Warriors Players
Shinobi Virgin
Street Hassle Melbourne House
Target Renegade Ocean
Thundercats Elite
Way Of The Exploding Fist Melbourne House
Way Of The Tiger Gremlin Graphics
Uchi Mata Martech
Vigilante US Gold
Yie Ar Kung Fu Imagine

ORIENTAL GAMES

YS GUIDE TO BEAT-'EM-UPS

Firebird/£9.99 cass/£14.99 disk



Matt We seem to have been wobbling on about *Oriental Games* for absolutely ages – it's one of a few games that've been hanging round at MicroProse doing nothing very much ever since the Firebird/Rainbird purchase. But now (at last!) it's here, and very pleased about it I am too – not because it's a particularly brilliant game or anything (though in fact it's not too bad) but because it's a) oriental (so it fits neatly into the theme of the issue) and b) a beat-'em-up, just right for this beat-'em-ups guide thingie.

In fact, playing it is like stepping back a few years to the days when straight beat-'em-ups were really big news. It's very much a traditional fighting game, not at all like the scrolling arcade things we've become used to, like *Dragon Ninja* and *Renegade*. There are no girlies to be rescued, no big end-of-level baddies to face or anything – all the action takes place on a static screen with only a single opponent at any one time, much like golden oldies *Exploding Fist* and System 3's *International Karate*. It's all structured like a real tournament, with the player taking on one computer-controlled character for a bout, then seeing how the other fights go before moving forward into the next round. Since all the computer-controlled characters look and fight exactly the same as each other this doesn't really amount to very much (except atmosphere) unless you're playing in two, three or four player mode, in which case you'll come up against the other player(s) sooner or later.

So far so dull, you may be thinking, and, yeah, I'd agree sort of, except that all the sprites are very slickly animated, with a satisfyingly (but confusingly) generous supply of combat moves (meaning, as beat-'em-ups go it's actually quite challenging). And, what's more, there's the bonus that *Oriental Games* simulates some Far Eastern fighting styles not normally seen on the Speccy.



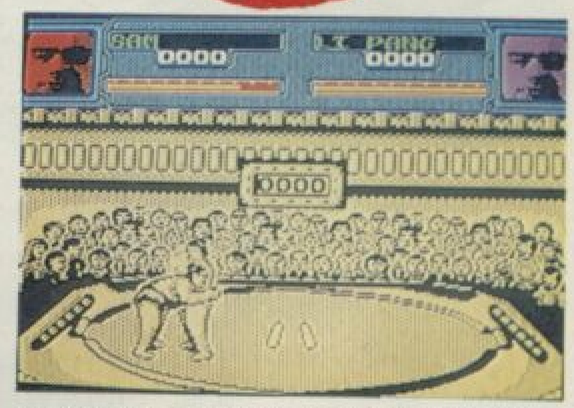
Here's the 'freestyle' kung fu bit, with that great all-rounder John Noakes representing Britain – looks more like some sort of Eastern European dancing display, doesn't it?

Okay, so in each tournament you've got to do some kung fu (pretty much what you'd expect) and freestyle (another version of kung fu but with some different fighting moves, like backflips), but the other two sports are far more interesting. For a start there's kendo (you wear bamboo armour and fight with big sticks) – this is nicely presented but often over in a flash, with the computer player's attack hacking away at your energy level in no time. Ho hum, my kendo skills need a bit of polishing up, I fear.

The highlight of the game though is the Japanese spook sport of sumo – even on the Speccy it has much the same bizarre fascination that the Channel 4 series held on TV. Not only are the two wrestlers very nicely animated (just look at the screenshots) but the fighting moves and tactics are very different from most beat-'em-ups, which adds a lot of much needed variety to what is otherwise a very 'seen it all before' sort of game. Briefly, you (as one mountainous fellow) have to try and push the other giant out of the ring with a series of slaps, shoves and trips. Alternatively, you can have a go at simply picking him up and carrying him out! Weird! I'm still terribly crap at it, but it's fun trying to learn.

Finally (and this is the important bit) how does it all rate in the *YS* 'Danceability' stakes (ie can you make the two little guys dance on screen if you get bored with the fighting)? Well, here it does pretty well actually – the 'freestyle' guys with their rubbery leaping-about do a good impression of The London Boys, while the sumos are truly a sight to be seen. Hours of fun!

All in all then, it's not going to set the world alight or anything, but having said that *Oriental Games* really isn't too bad at all.



Highlight of the game has to be this, the sumo section – the idea is to shove, trip or carry (!) your opponent right out of the ring, but it's a lot easier said than done!



In most events you can rebuild your energy level by avoiding contact with your opponent for a bit, but not so with kendo – most bouts are over in seconds!

finalverdict

80 60 40 20 — 73°

LIFE EXPECTANCY	GRAPHICS	ADDICTIVENESS
71°	74°	75°

DIAGNOSIS

A rather old-fashioned fighting game, but well put-together and featuring a variety of unusual sports. Quite fun for a while.

INSTANT APPEAL 69°


KICK OFF 2
ANCO
MAY RELEASE
AMIGA - ATARI ST - IBM PC
CBM64 - SPECTRUM - AMSTRAD
ANCO SOFTWARE LTD., UNIT 10, BURNHAM TRADING ESTATE ROAD,
DARTFORD, KENT. Telephone No.: 0322 92513/92518. FAX No.: 0322 93422.

HINTS'N'TIPS

YS TIPSHOP



More tips to tempt your cheating hearts with that ever-so-nice man behind the counter, *Jonathan Davies*.

It's laundry day today, so I may have to keep nipping out to slot a few more ten pees into the tumble dryer. And any coughing is likely to be due to the layers of Bold 3 that seem to get all over everything.

Other than that, everything's running pretty smoothly at the moment, especially on the tips front. It took a whole fleet of snow-ploughs to sort through this month's heap (after they'd finished on the washing powder, that is), and I even had to hire out Canterbury Cathedral for a couple of weeks to keep them all in. The eventual outcome is that this issue contains some of the most finely-honed tips this side of a set of ultra-fine Rotrings. Disappointed you won't be.

Okay, open the gates and let 'em through.

SNOOPY

Quite frankly, Snoopy and all his associated cuddly merchandise tend to make me feel slightly unwell, so this wasn't a game I rushed out and bought. Loads of people did though, so they'll be delighted to peruse the solution which **Lee Guest** has come up with. Lee?

Pick up the bowl, eat the food and drop the bowl. Next, go into the kennel, pick up the typewriter, go outside the kennel, type a letter, put the typewriter back into the kennel, pick up the letter and give it to Charlie Brown. Pick up the cookie jar and eat the cookies. Make your way to the river bank, stand quite close to the frog and catch it in the jar. Drop the jar. (Notice the barrel bobbing up and down.) Next find the football (usually outside the school). Stand on the river bank and throw it in the water. Next find the catapult (usually under the apple tree). Timing is very important here. Jump from the bank onto the barrel and immediately jump into the next screen. Jump from the stump to the ball, then onto the barrel and then into the next screen and onto the river bank. (Phew!) Use the catapult to shoot at the balloons until you see the pump appear on the ground. Drop the catapult and pick up the pump. (Don't worry about jumping all the way back, just walk into the water...) Now drop the pump under the tree with the kite in it. Go to Linus's place and take the rubber ring from Lucy. Note – be careful not to drop the ring, as it can only be dropped once. Drop it just at the left of the tree and use the pump to inflate it. Go as far left as you need to, turn to face the ring and then jump, making sure you jump immediately as you land through the rubber ring. Now take the kite and either give it to Charlie Brown or, if that doesn't work, drop it by the scoreboard. When Charlie Brown flies the kite he will drop a key, which should be used to open the locker with the bit of towel showing. Finally take the towel to Linus and give it to him.

Lovely, thanks very much, Lee. Bye.

Hang on! I've found another way too.

Oh, er, cripes. Go on, then.

Do everything in the first solution until you take the pump. Drop the pump by the scoreboard. Get the rubber ring from Lucy and drop it between the rain cloud and the scoreboard. Inflate it as before and drop the pump. Walk as far right as needed, face the cloud and jump, making sure you jump again through the rubber ring. Pick up the brick and throw it at the apple, which should be given to the teacher. Take the whistle and blow it to wake Peppermint Patty. Drop the whistle and pick up the scissors. Use them to open the parcel on Charlie Brown's doorstep. Take the bust and give it to Schroeder round at Linus's place. Walk towards Lucy and keep going until she disappears. Go back to the kitchen and you'll find the towel on the floor under the washing machine. Give it to Linus.

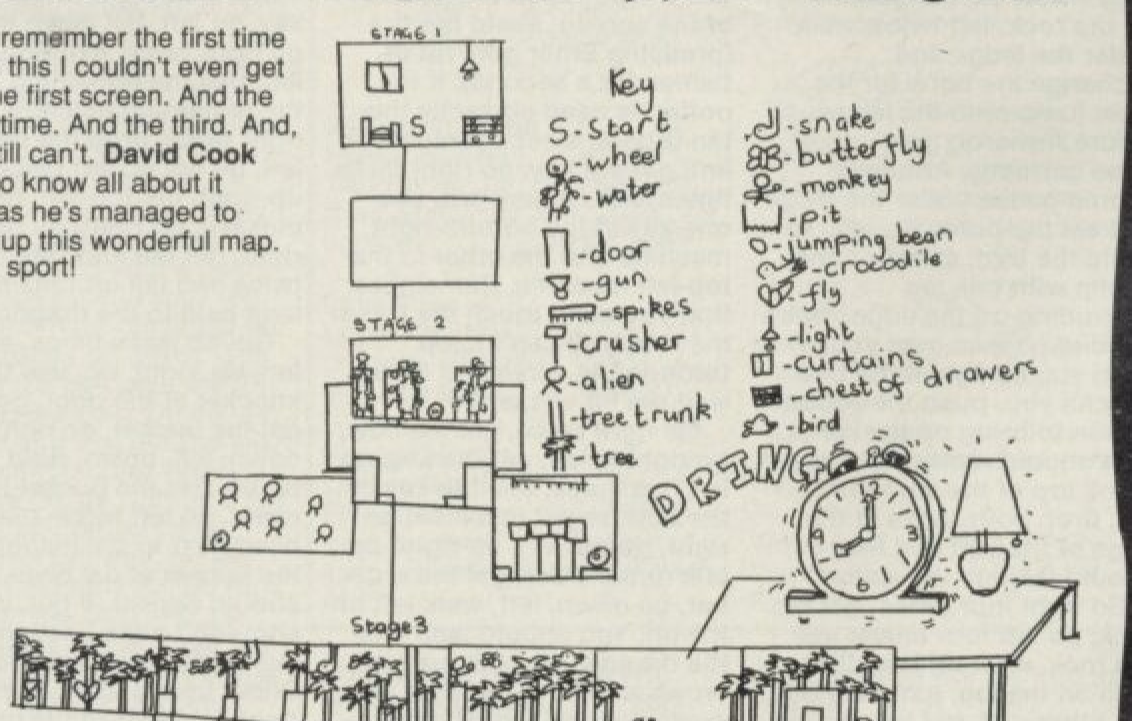
Well, that should keep you occupied for a while. But, just a second, he still hasn't gone yet...

Try dropping the bust or scissors under the rain-cloud from the left.

Right. Probably best not to do it just as you're about to complete the game though.

GREGORY LOSES HIS CLOCK

Hmm. I remember the first time I played this I couldn't even get out of the first screen. And the second time. And the third. And, erm, I still can't. **David Cook** seems to know all about it though as he's managed to conjure up this wonderful map. Cheers, sport!



BMX Freestyle Simulator

Har har. A Codies game crack. **Chris Gerbino** has the secret.

When asked to enter name, type in TAEHC (um, 'CHEAT' backwards) and you will always qualify.

That ought to simulate a few hours of fun for someone. Thanks, Chris.



Got a problem? See a specialist!

Phew, there are more gamesnags than ever in the Berkmann mailbag this month. Pass the scalpel, nurse, and may I say that that's a very nice outfit you're wearing. Your place or *(Get on with it. Ed).* Sorry.

DIZZY

Where were the bolt cutters, asked Paul Spillar? **Andy Harris** knew – but then he usually does. "Go right, right, right, right, right, down the hole made by the spade and then right and right again." Awight?

GREEN BERT

I've had loads of letters on this one, mostly from people who objected to me calling this crumbly old game '*Green Beret*' a month or two back. The name of the game is of course *Green Bert*, and let no-one mislead you otherwise. Some letters even solved Darren Walden's gamesnag – to whit, his inability to get past the first lorry on Level One. Writes **Richard Wood**: "All you have to do is keep the three flamethrowers until the lorry comes, then when it stops and all the baddies come running out wait until they're really close and use one of the 'flames'. Do this until you run out of throwers and pick off the last ones with the knife. By the way, you can't destroy the lorry!"

Alternately, here's **Sam Pike**'s solution. "Quite simply, there is a ladder on the lorry, just before the mines. Climb onto the lorry, stab the bloke on top, jump down off the lorry and carry on with the game." (Sam also has his own gamesnag – he can't get past the lorries on the last level of *Licence To Kill*. Any ideas?) **Marc Broster**, meanwhile, conveniently suggests both solutions. How's that, Darren? *(Not out. Ed)* Thanks also to **Ricky Leatham** and loads of others who will remain nameless (because I've lost their letters hahahahaha SMACK!).

STREETFIGHTER

Oliver Fletcher-Jones (crazy name, crazy guy) couldn't duff up Sagat, but **Justin Tribe** can, and here's what he's got to say on the matter. "Make sure that at the start you jump over his fireballs, then, when it's safe, duck, kick him because he can't kick you when you duck, then retreat, else you'll be on fire. Go on doing this until he's dead. Remember, you can't duck his fireballs, so always jump them." Got that, Ol? (I'm not sure I have, to be honest, but mine is not to reason why, mine is to do and send a huge bill in for it afterwards.) In case you haven't got it, here's another worthy Clinician, **Kevin Ferguson**: "You bet. My advice is to jump in the air several times and kick him in the head. Jump backwards a couple of times and repeat the process, watching out for fireballs."

INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE

An interesting one here. Anthony Ruddy had problems on Level Two, since he couldn't get from the second ladder to the three platforms on the left (turn right at the traffic lights). **Thomas Vanner**, the crafty so-and-so, knows the answer, and I print his solution in full: "Well, there is no solution as such, because Anthony has bought a bugged copy. Return the game to US Gold, Units 2/3, Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX along with a letter of explanation, and they'll send you back one that works." Ta, Tom.

GOOD EGG

This month's oeuf is **Tony Hassall**, who greets me "Yo, Doc!" and adds a PS "How about a picture of T'zer to drool over?" Alas, no can do on the pic front, Tone, but let me offer you a load of haylp letters from *YS* readers clued up on the games you mentioned. Which are – *Dizzy, Treasure Island Dizzy, Robocop, Running Man, Chronos, Rockstar, Freddy Hardest, Arkanoid 1 & 2, Driller, Nonterraqueous, Saboteur 2, Starquake, Knightmare, Stormbringer, Legend Of Kage, Agent X, Enduro Racer, Dan Dare* and *Firefly.* Tony's address is 124 Stockport Road, Longsight, Manchester M13 9DZ, and remember to send him an sae with your query! (No jam, please.)

AUF WIEDERSEHEN MONTY

A few letters asking for haylp on this rereleased golden oldie. **Martin Massey** wants to know what to do with the football (take it to Juventus), the steering wheel (Monaco), the flower vase (dunno) and the Mona Lisa (is it Paris? I can't remember!). Similarly, **Simon Thick** wants to get rid of the tools and the meat from Copenhagen. Any ideas?

BUMPER HAYLPARAMA

I've got simply trillions of Haylps this month, Spec-chums, and as ever I'm relying on YOU to render assistance. Remember, there's a badge in it for anyone who gets mentioned, and the odd game (we'll make sure it's not too odd) for service beyond the call of duty. Right, here goes...

Anthony 'Don't Call Me The Goat' Whitaker: "In *Rambo*, I can get inside the chopper after rescuing the hostages and get all the weapons. But what do I do then?"

Daniel Hawkins: "In *Karnov*, after killing the fish creature I always get killed by the shooting rock. Haylp! And in *Roy Of The Rovers*, when I've got the money for the pass it always gets stolen, and I can't find the key for the hypermarket. What's more..." No, that's your lot. Next!

Adam Dowsett: "Please, someone, tell me what the last password is in *Venom Strikes Back*!"

Stuart Aitken: "In *Barbarian*, when you have just started, how do you get past the bit with the cliff? Also, in *Rambo 3*, I found the silencer pistol and pressed H to change my weapon but nothing happened. Does anyone know why?"

Andrew Neal: "On Level Two of *Myth*, how do you get past the giant three-headed Hydra monster? And what does the sack do?"

Mark Stevens: "In *Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom*, where is the mineshaft entrance on the screen where you have to set free the fourth lot of children?"

Gordon Ogilvie: "Does anyone know how and where to use the hook in *Contact Sam Cruise*?"

Write with your solutions (or gamesnags) to Dr B, *YS*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2AP. Global megastardom awaits anyone lucky enough to be picked out of the bag and mentioned (or possibly not).

FANTASY ISLAND DIZZY

Judging by the floor-endangering quantity of maps, solutions and pleas for help still flooding in, this one's very popular indeed. Quite why is another matter altogether. Anyway, to accompany last month's map and tips, here's a complete solution courtesy of **David Whyte**.

Right, fasten your seatbelts 'cos this one's a bit on the longish side...

Give the apple to the troll, take the bread and jug, use the jug near the flames, go left, take the rock, exit top-right, drop the bread where the rat can get it, go up, drop the rock, exit top-left, use the switch, go up, go right, get key, go left, down, left, down, right twice, exchange the key for the rock, left twice, walk under the ledge and exchange the bone for the rock, jump onto the ledge before Armorog gets you. If done correctly, Armorog should pause under the ledge and eat the bone. Go left. To avoid the bird, stand on the stump with one leg protruding off the edge. When the bird passes over your head you can go. If the bird attacks you, push the action button to bring up the menu. This should replace the bird at the top of the screen. Go left, drop both rocks at the edge of the cliff and they should fall into the water.

Go right four times, get the rock, go left four times, use the rock, walk off the cliff to land on the log, jump left onto the other cliff, get key, go left twice, go left avoiding the hole in the pier marked as a slanting piece of wood in between the crate and the barrel, talk to Dozy, take the potion, go right eight times, use the potion in the middle of the screen, avoid the fire (pressing Enter gets rid of flames for a second). If the potion is used correctly then the dragon sleeps tonight. Go left, get the key, go right three times, exit bottom-left, use one key at the bottom-right machine and the other in the top-left machine. Remember that you can't touch the top of the lifts, you can't jump through the wires and if you wait the lift will arrive.

Go right twice, get the cow, go right twice, get the key, go left five times, use the key in the bottom-left machine, go right, go up, left, up-right, up, talk to the elder, get the crow bar, go down, left, walk left off the lift. You should land near the dragon, go right, use the crowbar next to the well, fall down the well, go left and wait, the shopkeeper will appear (notice that gravity holds you to the ceiling but his hat of corks defies it), give the cow to the shopkeeper and he'll give you a bean. Go right twice, get the key, go left, fall down the well, go right twice, exit bottom left, use the remaining key in the remaining machine, go right twice, drop the bean, go left, go up, go left twice, go up-right, up, top-left, get the pickaxe, go right, go bottom-right, get the knocker, go left twice and fall off the lift to land next to the dragon.

Go left three times, exit top-left, up, right, up, use the knocker at the door, go left, get the bucket, go right, down, left, down, right nine times, use the bucket in the water, go left twice, use the bean next to the manure, use the bucket and a bean stalk should appear. If not, you shouldn't have used the pesticides, so try again. Climb up the stalk, jump right, jump up to the clouds to leave the screen at the top-right. You should be on a cloud in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen. Stand on the far-left edge of the cloud and jump right. Go

right, jump up the next two clouds and walk off right to land on the far-right cloud, exit right, jump over the gap in the cloud and get the egg. For a peek at who you're rescuing go right but don't walk into the spikes. You can walk down through the gap in the clouds but you must walk left. You will land near the volcano crater, go left, down, left four times, down, drop the egg next to the egg on straw.

The dragon will let you pass. Go right, use the axe on the ledge under the coin, go left, get the rug, go right, try to use the right exit to ensure the troll gets in trouble for letting you escape. (His body has now been replaced by a coin in the room where you started.) Go left, up, right twice, up, right three times, use the rug.

The coast is clear now to rescue Daisy. Just touch the switch at the top of the screen to bring the lift down. When you rescue her she'll ask you to find 30 coins to buy a home. Before you rescue her take the coin under the table and then go and find the rest of them.

Don't you think you'd better tell the folks out there where to find them?

But that'll take ages!

Look, we've come this far. They'll never forgive us if we give up now.

You reckon? Okay...

Go left, down the gap in the clouds, get the coin (2), left, down, jump left while standing on the grass to the right of Dylan. If done right you will land on a branch in the tree. Now move as far left as possible. Jump left to land on the other branch. Get the leaves and the coin hiding underneath (3). Drop leaves and go left, up, right, get the coin (4), up, right, get the coin (5). Now position yourself on the cloud below and walk right. You should land on a cloud with a coin on it. Get it (6) and walk left, go left until you reach the lift control room, go down. Get the coin (7), go down the lift, right, get the coin (8), go left, up, right and exit middle-left, get the coin hidden behind the fence (9), go right and left over the lift control room.

Go down the well, go left and get the coin (10), go right twice, get the coin (11), go left, go up (or down), get the coin behind the leaves above the well (12), get the coin behind the railing (13), go left three times, get the coin behind the railing top-right (14), go right, get the coin (15), go down, left, top left, up, get the coin (16), right, get the coin (17), up, get the coin (18), down, left, down, right, left, get the coin (19), left twice, get the coin (20), left twice, stand on the red box, jump right onto the red pillar, jump up, get the coin (21), down, stand on the box next to the same red box as before and jump left. If done right you should fall in between the boxes. Now walk right and you will fall into an illusion.

Walk left and right until you have fallen to the floor. Now walk right until you are stopped. Jump onto this rock and then jump left to land on the ledge containing the coin (22), fall to the floor again and jump right, walk left and right until you find the rock lying lengthwise and stand on the very left of it. Jump right and you should fall into a space on the far right of the screen. Now jump right and left alternately until you reach the top of the screen. Walk as far right as you can and jump left. You will land on top of

TIP O'THE MONTH

GHOULS AND GHOSTS

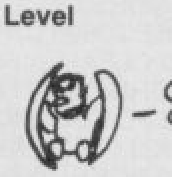
A huge wad of beautififully drawn tips had the good fortune to land on my desk just as I was compiling this month's Tipshop. Unfortunately, through my own sheer incompetence, the name of their originator went adrift so I haven't a clue who put them together. My only clue is that he (or she, of course) has a brother who looks like a Headless Giant, so if whoever it is could drop me a line I'll whack a badge in the post.



Grim Reaper Zombies – Levels One & Four These are easy – one hit and they're dead.



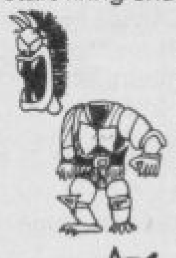
Vultures – Level One Go underneath them and fire up.



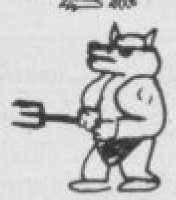
Imps – Level One Shoot them before they turn into a tornado.



Skull Plants – Level One Shoot them before they start firing skulls at you.



Headless Giant – Level One Guardian Jump his bullets and shoot his head to kill him.



Trident Man – Levels One & Five Don't run from him 'cos he's fast. Face him and keep firing.



Bouncing Stone Heads – Level Two Run under them when they bounce.



Lava Flies – Level Two No problem. Destroy or dodge them.



Flying Demon – Levels Two & Five Before he swoops down, jump up and keep firing.



Venus Fly Trap – Level Two Shoot it before it fires at you.



Deadly Bird – Levels Two, Three, Four & Five One shot to kill.



Fire Dog – Level Two Guardian Keep shooting at it when it runs towards you, and when it's in the air duck under it and shoot its behind.



Flying Cow Heads – Level Three & Five Just dodge their bombs and jump up to shoot them.



Whirly Head – Level Three As soon as this comes into sight, stop, wait for two to three minutes and it'll go away.



Cloudy Eyeball – Level Three Guardian This one's quite easy. Just keep dodging and shooting him when you can.



Three Ball Snake – Level Four



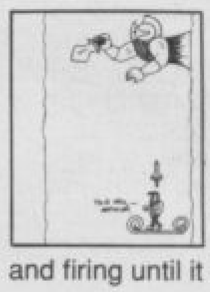
Firing Hand – Level Four Shoot them before they fire balls at you.



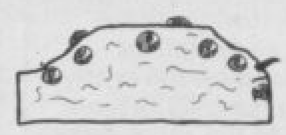
Slug – Level Four This appears out of thin air, so shoot it while it flashes.



Firing Stone – Level Four Shoot his head to kill him.



Level Three Go under the stone knight and keep jumping up and firing until it disappears.



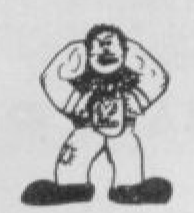
Giant Sea Monster Carcus – Level Four Guardian Go across into the middle of his body and all the maggot holes will appear. Shoot the holes and all the maggots you can.



Firing Skulls – Level Five You can't kill these – just dodge their bullets.



Moving Heads – Level Five Jump and duck their bullets. When you have killed them a door opens!



Big Strong Man – Level Five Duck the bullets that the head he holds fires and keep firing.



Level Five Guardian Go here while he turns back into a fly. Do the same as the right side.



Go here and jump up and fire at him. Duck his bullets.

Mm. That should keep us going for many a long night. Ta, Mr X.

two rocks. The one holding you up is the left one. Go to the edge of this rock and jump left. Now walk as far right as the rock you are standing on will let you. Jump right and then left. You should now be in the screen above. Jump right and walk right 'til you leave the boxes.

Now go left. Stand as far left on the boxes as possible and jump right. You will land on top of the coin. Get it (23), go left and then over the boxes. Go right until you reach the portcullis and go right. Go down, left, down-right, get the coin (24), go left, top-right, up. Go right until you reach the lift control room and go right, up, left, left up the lift and right, up, up the lift again and right, get the coin (25), left and down the lift, jump left off the platform into screen-left, get the coin (26), now jump off the platform as far left as possible to land on the crafty cloud. Get the coin (27), walk left, go right to the room right of the lift control room and get the coin (28) if you haven't already.

At this point you should have 28 coins. If not, you're in trouble and had better sort things out quick.

Otherwise, go up, left and get the coin hidden behind the railing top-right (29). Go right, touch Daisy to read a typical argument of a happily engaged couple, go past Daisy without stopping and get the coin hidden behind the window on the right (30). Touch Daisy to finish.

And if you had trouble wading through all that lot, imagine how I felt having to type it out.

DOMINATOR

There was a cheat for this one on one of February's Tip Cards, but it seems that some people are still having problems with it. As if through some spooky second sight, Emma 'The Pest' Edwards has come up with an alternative.

Press down Z,X,M,V,N,J,H together and you'll make yourself invisible. This means you can just sit back and let your ship run into things without getting killed. The same keys turn it off.

Lovely.

Ho Hum

Right, I'll go and put my jeans in to soak now, and then make a start on the ironing. In the meantime I want you to write as many tips as you can, mix them in with a few maps, and send 'em in to me, Jonathan Davies at Tipshop, *YS*, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2AP. Tatty bye!

PRACTICAL POKES

There's a new kid on the block! And his name's *Jon North*! Hurrah!

Hello, I'm Jon. Yup, Macca's gone off to write full time for *ZERO* so I've been asked to take his place. Actually, if the truth be told, I'm no stranger to these pages – Axxman and myself are in fact one and the same. But enough of all this confusion. On with the show...

IDIOT'S GUIDE

Actually, no, before we get started it mightn't be a bad idea to quickly run through the basics of how to actually *use* these POKEs. Yes, yes, I know most of you are veterans but for the unlucky few, well, you've just got lucky...

Tap in the listing, save it for future use, RUN it, then play the tape from the beginning. The game will load with the POKEs firmly in place.

Awight? Awight.

NIGHTMARE ON ROBINSON STREET

This cover tape seemed to go down very well with you lot – I received several letters containing hacks for it. I've taken the best features from all of them and incorporated these into one routine. Thanks for this go to **Graham 'Sulky Systems' Sulkin** of Liverpool and **Chris Goodchild** of Hampshire. Tap it in and RUN it, then start the tape.

```
110 REM NORS by CG and
GS20 POKE 23693,0: POKE
23624,030 CLEAR 24889:
LOAD ""SCREEN$40 LOAD
""CODE50 POKE 53267,060
POKE 56139,070 POKE
49890,X80 POKE 49937,X90
RANDOMIZE USR 49830
```

Line 50 gives immunity against bullets, line 60 gives immunity against shooting the dogs, line 70 lets you set the amount of enemies you have to kill before the big one (1-255) and line 80 lets you set the amount of starting energy (1-255).

RAINBOW ISLANDS

Here's a quick hack for Ocean's cutesy platform game from yours truly. It gives infinite lives and stops you losing your rainbow power when you lose a life.

```
210 REM R.I. by Jon North
20 FOR F=16384 TO
1645330 READ A: POKE
F,A: NEXT F40
RANDOMIZE USR 1638450
DATA 221,33,203,92,1760
DATA 30,15,62,255,5570
DATA 205,86,5,48,24180
DATA 33,149,98,54,19590
DATA 35,54,30,35,54100
DATA 64,49,224,92,201110
DATA 33,138,11,34,145120
DATA 130,62,201,50,187130
DATA
128,201,33,229,130140
DATA 22,100,1,0,1150 DATA
89,115,35,114,33160 DATA
62,64,237,176,195170 DATA
161,130,62,217,50180 DATA
```

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

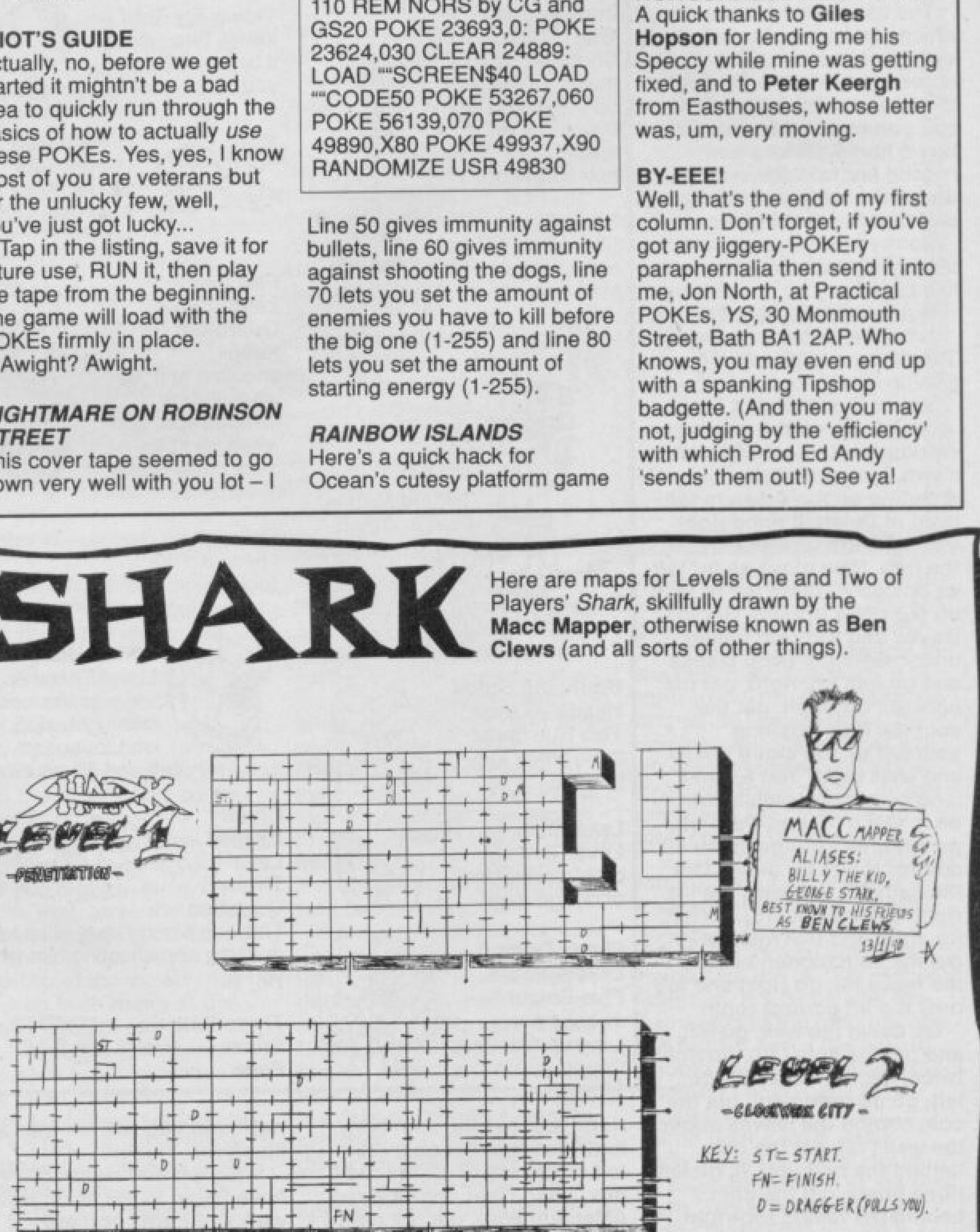
A quick thanks to **Giles Hopson** for lending me his Speccy while mine was getting fixed, and to **Peter Keergh** from Easthouses, whose letter was, um, very moving.

BY-EEE!

Well, that's the end of my first column. Don't forget, if you've got any jiggery-POKEry paraphernalia then send it into me, Jon North, at Practical POKEs, *YS*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2AP. Who knows, you may even end up with a spanking Tipshop badgette. (And then you may not, judging by the 'efficiency' with which Prod Ed Andy 'sends' them out!) See ya!

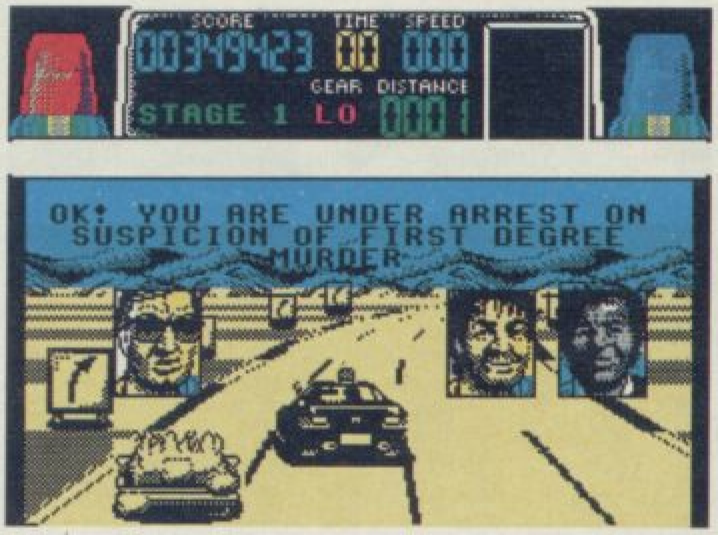
SHARK

Here are maps for Levels One and Two of Players' *Shark*, skillfully drawn by the **Macc Mapper**, otherwise known as **Ben Clews** (and all sorts of other things).



racing game

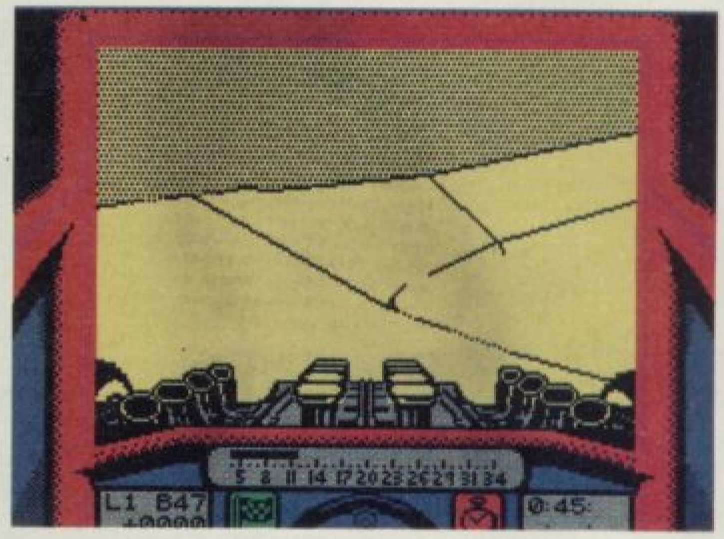
NOURISHING TIPS



CHASE HQ

driving sim

NOURISHING TIPS



STUNT CAR RACER

shoot 'em up

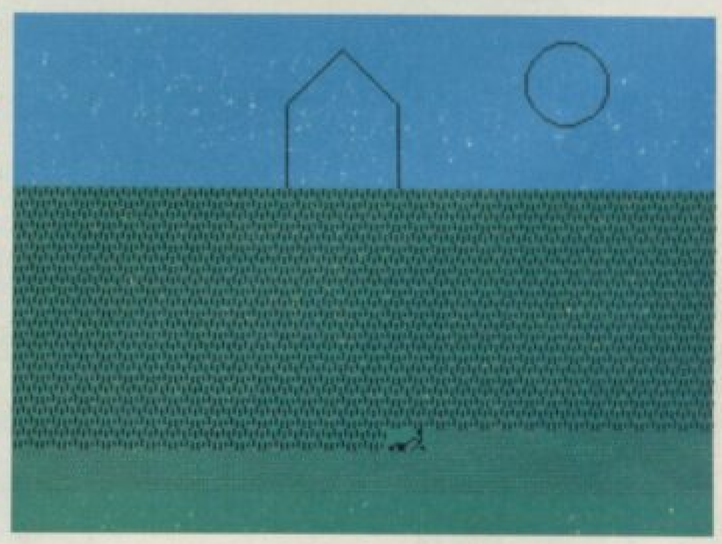
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OPERATION GUNSHIP

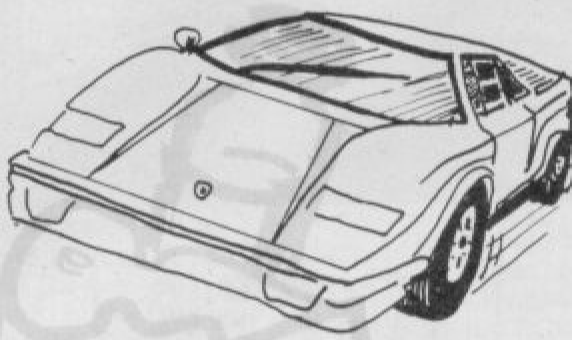
gardening sim

NOURISHING TIPS



ADVANCED LAWN MOWER SIMULATAR

Chase HQ
by **Paul Luby**
The trick is to redefine the keys as SHOCKED (Enter). A test menu then appears. Pressing One to Six lets you study the logo animation and Six allows you to put your name in the high-score table in first place. While playing the game, One lets you restart the level you're playing, Two takes you to the next level, Three shows you the end screen and Four gives you an extra credit each time you press it. Brill, eh?



Stunt Car Racer
by **Steven Calvert**

Division Four
Hump Back – Stay calm and you'll have no probs. Go as fast as possible over the hump; Little Ramp – Take the ramp at 140mph and go full-pelt afterwards.

Division Three
Stepping Stones – This is a bit tricky. Maintain 140mph over the ramps and you'll be okay; Big Ramp – Use 170mph for small ones and 210mph for the biggest.

Division Two
Roller Coaster – Stay under 100mph until you reach the top then burn rubber; High Jump – This is one mean mutha. Stay between 200 and 220mph and you'll bounce in the middle. It might be wise to go faster however.

Division One
Ski Jump – This is another hard 'un. Drive at 140mph until you're at the top of the jump then pile on that speed.

Super League
Same tracks, different car, better opponents.
• If you release your controls the car centres itself on the track • Turbos work in reverse • On sharp bends SLOW DOWN. You get large amounts of damage if you don't.

Operation Gunship
by **Steve Calvert**
Behold, the only CodeMasters 'simulator' that doesn't have the word 'simulator' in the title! Here are the coordinates for the prisoners, x-axis first.

Mission One
1) K4, L7 5) J3, K9
2) K2, J8 6) L6, L9
3) J6, L8 7) J5, J4
4) K7, K7 8) L9, K8

Mission Two
1) K0, K4 5) J3, J3
2) M5, K3 6) O6, J3
3) N2, J2 7) L2, K0
4) N6, K5 8) P2, K1

Mission Three
1) K5, O7 5) K3, L3
2) J2, J7 6) J7, P1
3) J3, M4 7) K5, J5
4) J1, N9 8) K2, P9

Mission Four
1) K2, L0 5) J1, K7
2) L3, K2 6) M0, M0
3) J1, L4 7) K4, J1
4) L3, L5 8) J1, M1

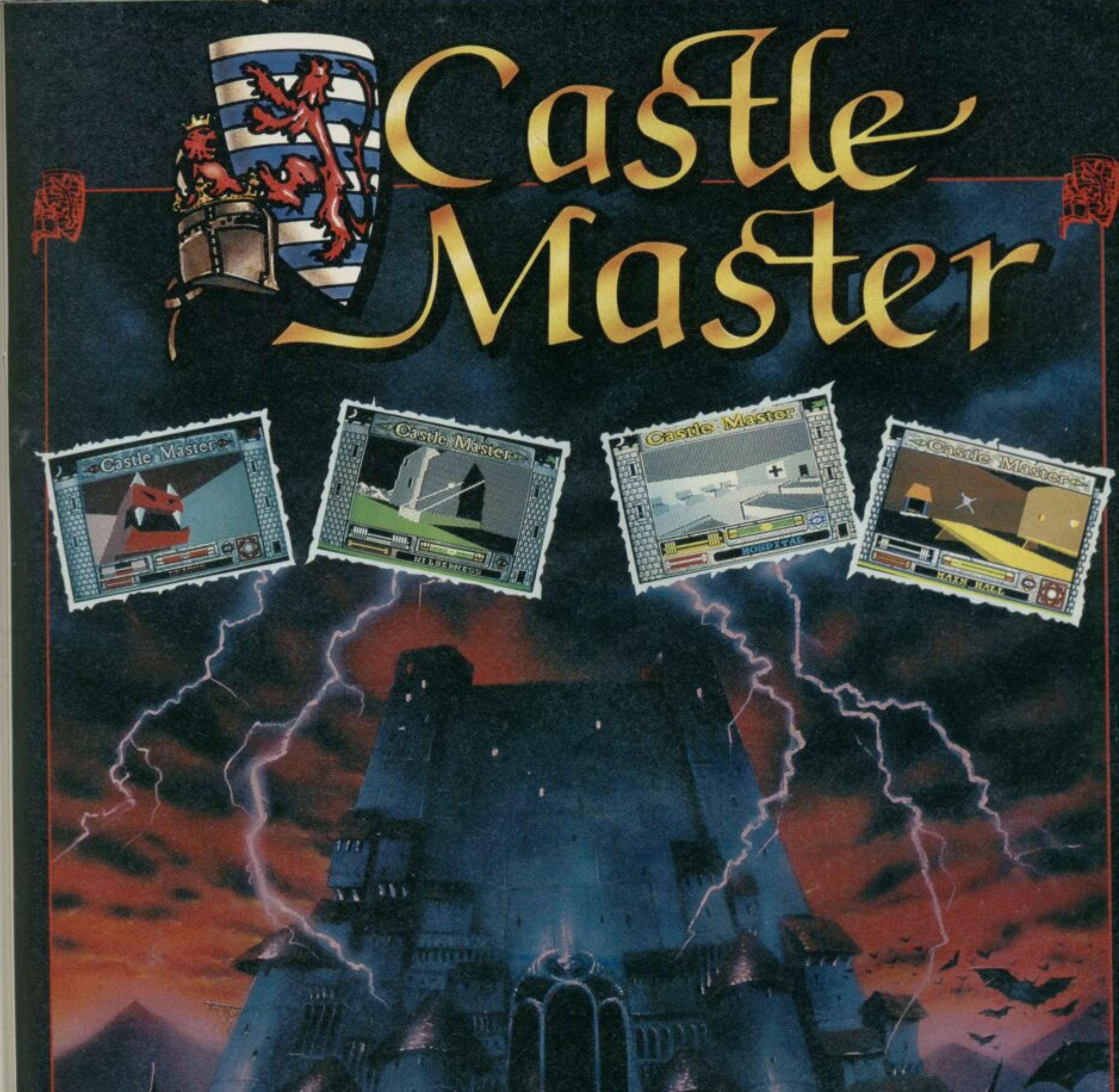
Mission Five
1) K5, L9 5) J6, J9
2) K6, K0 6) L6, L4
3) K1, K9 7) J6, K4
4) K4, N9 8) I9, J9

The best tactic is to destroy all the defences and airstrips, re-arm, then find the prisoners. Oh, and if you destroy all the buildings and stuff you get a 5,000 points bonus.

Advanced Lawn Mower Simulator
by **Christopher Conneally.**

When in the game press BREAK twice and write 130 REM 1245. It should speed up when mowing the lawn.




Castle Master
Castle Master
Castle Master
Castle Master
Castle Master
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Dunc Hands up who knows what Darius means? I know because I'm a fund of information. *(He looked it up in the dictionary. Ed)* The answer's really boring as it happens, but I'm going to tell you anyway because I'm in a bit of an annoying mood.

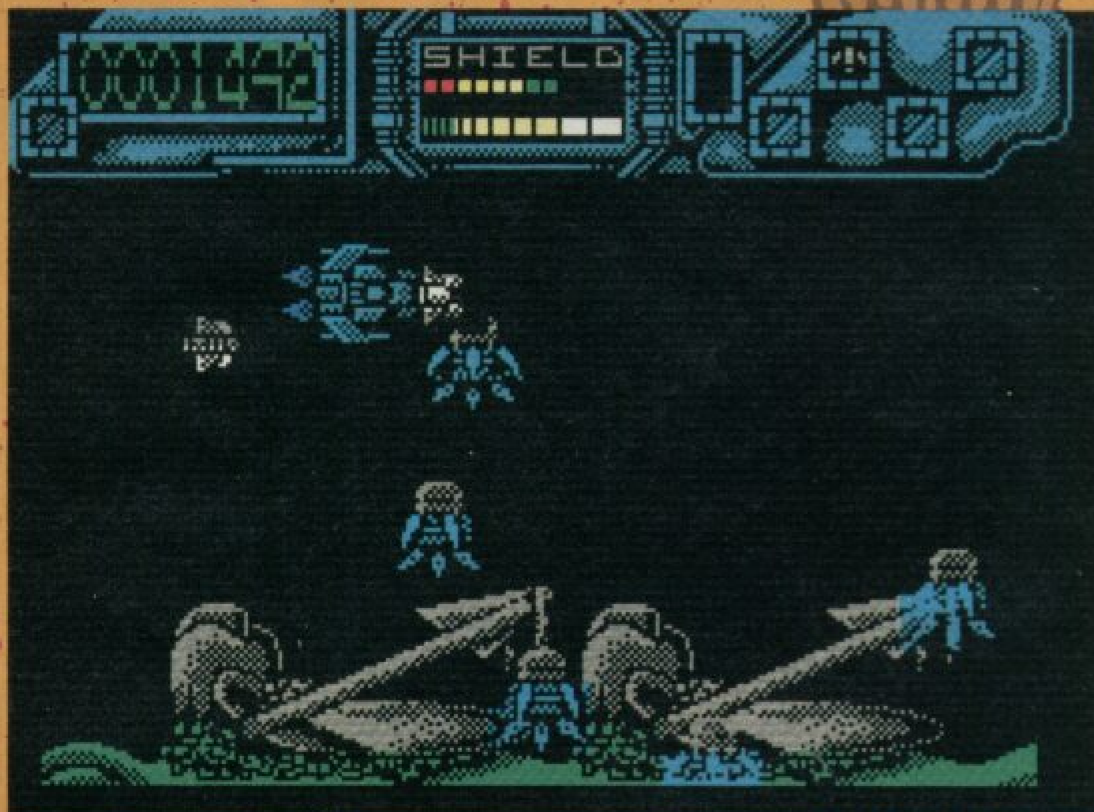
Darius was a bloke. Not just your average bloke though – he was King of Persia (in about 500 BC), and what the old scallywag is famous for is that he invaded Greece... and lost! What a clot. So, what's *Darius* the computer game all about then? Is it based on the invasion of Greece 500 years before the little baby Jesus was born? Nope, I don't think so actually. (Unless the Persian army had a spaceship that collected power-up icons, and the battle against the ancient Greeks was waged in the far reaches of interstellar space.)

No, *Darius* isn't a game of historical conquest, it is in fact a horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up. A coin-op conversion, to be precise. So what's it like then? Well how on earth should I know? I haven't played it yet. Come back in a few hours and I'll have a better idea (go and have a bath or something). Toodlepip!

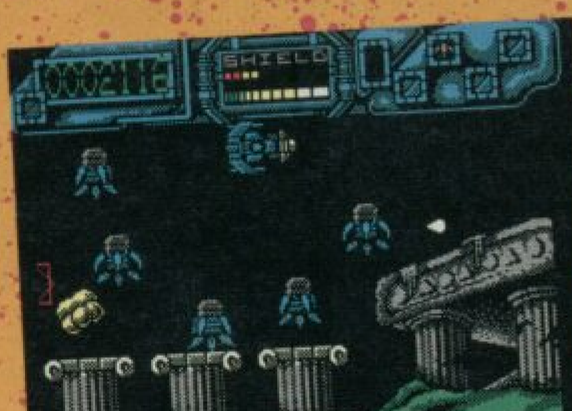
A FEW HOURS LATER...

Right. Now I can tell you about *Darius*. Um, Darius was the King of Persia in about 500 BC. *(Oh no, not AGAIN. Ed)* This *Darius*, however, is a game akin to *R-Type* – but don't get too excited, because it's not half as good! The setting is the same sort of thing as *R-Type*. You know, backgrounds that continually scroll from the right and mustn't be banged into, nasties that bob up and down and come at you from all sides, the obligatory add-ons to the ship which make it really funky and deadly and the absolutely gigantic end-of-level nasties. That sort of gear. Let's don the thigh-length wellies and wade in for a closer look.

Your ship, then. Er, it's quite big and colourful, but incredibly vulnerable because there's not a lot of room in which to avoid things – if you cock up slightly and miss a couple of oncoming nasties they'll bash into you and knock your rather weedy shields for six. Fortunately there are two types of 'pick-up icons' – the first being temporary invincibility. Very useful. Using this you can hack right into the enemy waves without coming to any harm, and then snatch the second type of pick-up, which is the weapons upgrade (a sort of wibbly red block).



As you can see, the little spaceship you control isn't actually very little at all – in fact, it's blooming massive. So large you're often very limited as to how far you can move to avoid things (especially when there're loads of spikey poles in the way).



See that little red thing going off-screen to the left there? Well, there's a power-up, and you should have grabbed it!



Wheee-doggie! This is more like it! I've got a super-blaster weapon thing on the front there and I'm really cooking. (Just like the aroma! Ed)

Single laser bolts. Double laser bolts. Three-way shot. Giant fireball. And that's just four – there are loads more. Fight your way through all the action (it's pretty frenetic by the way) and you'll eventually reach the end-of-level nasty – a really big 'mutha'. Beat that and you load in the next level, with its different backdrops and different nasties.

Like I said, it's all very *R-Type*ish. But why isn't it as good? Well, for a start there's the problem of room. Because the sprites are bigger than those in *R-Type*, there's less space to play with. It makes the game frustrating. And the animation isn't as smooth either. Generally the whole game lacks the polish and crispness that made *R-Type* so absolutely brilliant. Having said that, I'll add that *Darius* has a lot more levels than *R-Type*, and for all the shortcomings on the graphics and animation front, it does contain that oh-so-important ingredient of addictiveness. Hmm.

Okay, final summing-up paragraph time – and hello if you're the sort of person who leaps straight in at this point and doesn't bother reading the main bulk of the review. Um, I'll keep things short and sweet. If you're expecting *R-Type* then you're going to be rather disappointed. However, if you're expecting a poor man's *R-Type* then you're just about spot on. Right – I'm off to invade Greece. Wish me luck. *(He'll never pull it off. Ed)*

finalverdict

80 60 40 20 — 75°

LIFE EXPECTANCY	GRAPHICS	ADDICTIVENESS
75°	70°	80°

DIAGNOSIS

A sideways-scrolling shoot-'em-up with all the usual stuff. A bit like *R-Type* really but not half as good.

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Another delve into the recesses of Speccy softstuff with *Dr Marcus* "Stand very still and try not to scream" *Berkmann*.

BARGAIN BASEMENT

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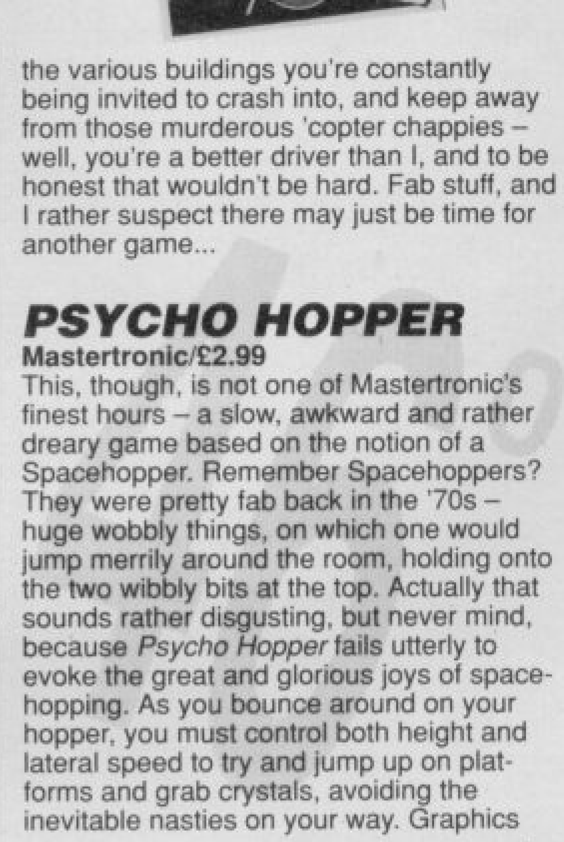
What, yet another new game from CodeMasters? Phew, these boys are busy. This one's a sort of follow-up to *Super Stuntman*, and it's a nice little runner (20 thousand on the clock, squire, new carburettor, and a bargain at seven grand). The view's from above, and you have to whizz through a course, avoiding all the usual rocks (slow you down), mines (blow you up) and, a little unsportingly, all the bullets coming from the other cars. Zoom over water by means of a ramp or a bridge or drive through it at about 2 mph – it's your choice. And best of all, you do all this in the tastiest of red gleamy Italian motors. First up is the Lambo, and thereafter there are four more courses, all of which you must negotiate in a brand new car. (Sadly you don't get to keep them afterwards.) In fact, you even get three lives, which is one major difference from real stunt car racing (one life). If you can get through all the course, avoid all the various buildings you're constantly being invited to crash into, and keep away from those murderous 'copter chappies – well, you're a better driver than I, and to be honest that wouldn't be hard. Fab stuff, and I rather suspect there may just be time for another game...



PSYCHO HOPPER

Mastertronic/£2.99

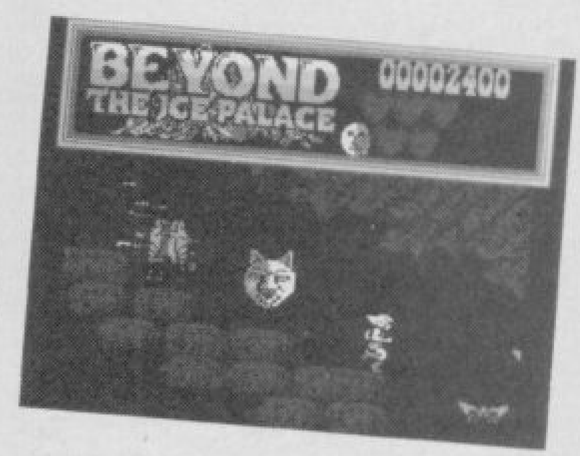
This, though, is not one of Mastertronic's finest hours – a slow, awkward and rather dreary game based on the notion of a Spacehopper. Remember Spacehoppers? They were pretty fab back in the '70s – huge wobbly things, on which one would jump merrily around the room, holding onto the two wibbly bits at the top. Actually that sounds rather disgusting, but never mind, because *Psycho Hopper* fails utterly to evoke the great and glorious joys of spacehopping. As you bounce around on your hopper, you must control both height and lateral speed to try and jump up on platforms and grab crystals, avoiding the inevitable nasties on your way. Graphics are, well, basic (if not actually in Basic) and the whole game drags along until you reach Level Two and find that it's no more interesting than Level One. You know the sort of game that chugs along incredibly slowly until you find a 'go faster' pill and it all becomes a little more interesting. Sorry, this ain't one of them. Snore city, I'm afraid.



BEYOND THE ICE PALACE

Encore/£2.99

Here's a chasy little runabout that Elite first released 18 months or so ago to great approval (Dunc gave it 8/10 back in July '88). It's a big-sprited arcade adventure, with the emphasis on 'arcade', as it's fearsomely hard. "Beyond the ice palace and to the north," it says here, "legend tells of a mystical land where strange creatures dwell." Well, it would, wouldn't it? "It is a land of fantasy and magic, of goblins and ghosts, of good and evil, of long-forgotten tiny pieces of Blu-tac." So Dunc found anyway, and it is indeed a ripsnorter of a game, set in underground caverns where every yard you manage to cover is an achievement. There are flying bats to kill (easy), axe-throwing ogres (less easy) and occasionally giant moths (unbelievably tricky). If you can get past this section, the cave opens up into a giant platform-and-ladders format, which is where the fun really starts. Anyone who likes a really challenging bit of action will lap this up. Oh, and look out for the little head-shaped icons – they're the spirits of the woods, and jolly useful they are too.



ARCADE FRUIT MACHINE

Zeppelin/£2.99

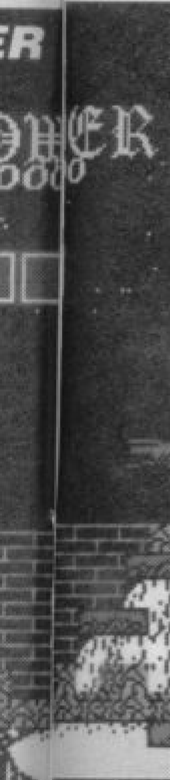
Yet another fruit machine sim on the market (I think we all know what computer programmers spend all their money on, don't we?), but *Arcade Fruit Machine* is not, sadly, one of the best. It's playable enough, as you'd expect – the graphics are perfectly acceptable and I have no complaints about speed. But with some of the more recent sims becoming really rather advanced – and needing about as much concentration and brainpower as a flight sim – this could be a little too straightforward for modern

SUPER DRAGON SLAYER

CodeMasters/£2.99



Crikey, if it isn't yet another inventive and challenging game from the Codies. (Not words I'd have written a year ago, but then they really seem to have got

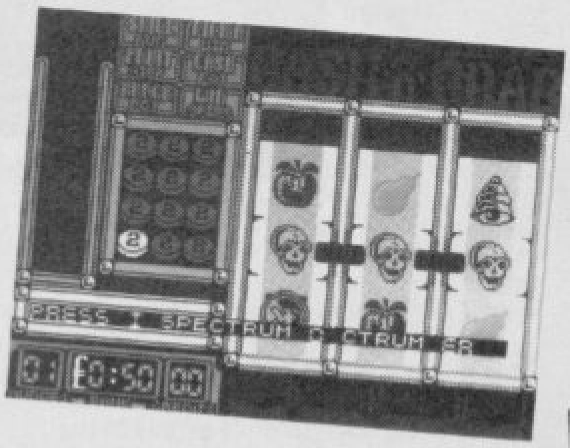


their act together.) *Super Dragon Slayer* is a shoot-'em-up, and it's a blast on every level. You, poor misguided wretch, are an ever-so-brave knight in soon-to-be-not-so-shining armour, and all you really have to do is run through a scrolling background killing as many of the formation meanies that fly at you as you can. With nasties always coming at the same time and place, and with a bit of jumping around for different platforms, this is much in the same vein as *Cobra*, but with one difference – colour! This is as colourful a game as you could ever hope to meet, 'cos for once the programmers have thought "Attribute clash? Who gives a monkeys about attribute clash?" As a result it's not the slickest graphical display I've seen but certainly one of the most vivid.

As for the game itself, well, it's fast and frantic. There are spells to be had, and part of the fun is in finding out what these actually do. And there are two levels of difficulty – Novice for dullards like me, and Smug Git for clever clogses like you. Well worth your pennies.



but the graphics are less impressive here, there's less colour, and it's all disconcertingly easy. I mean, if I can get to Stage Two on the first attempt, there's got to be something wrong. Ah, but you can use a Magnum Lightphaser™ if you happen to have one. Sadly I don't. Otherwise, a damp squib (glub glub).



tastes. I suppose we've just been spoilt really – CodeMasters' recent *Fruit Machine Simulator 2* is light years ahead, and Zeppelin is probably just nine months late. At £2.99, too, it's a touch on the pricey side. For younger players only perhaps (if, that is, you don't mind younger players mucking around with fruit machines). For the rest, the CodeMasters title is a better bet.

AMERICAN TURBO KING

Mastertronic/£1.99

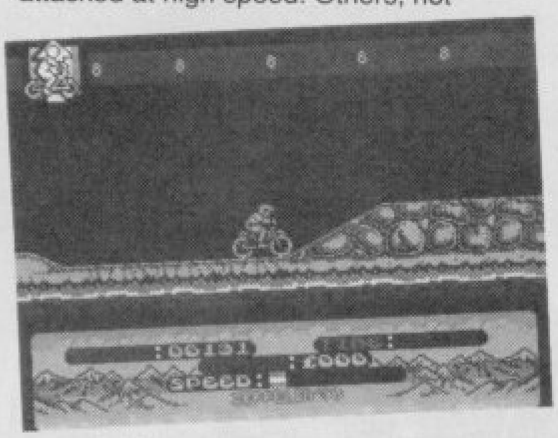
Hello, what's this? There I am, drivelling on about how different, exciting and fun CodeMasters' *Italian Super Car* is and up pops a game almost exactly like it. *American Turbo King* – the location refers to the courses this time, not the cars – is very much the same kettle of fish, and more than a mite whiffy, if you ask me. "Action! Action! Action!" shouts the blurb, which is a slight exaggeration, as the game is both slower and less challenging than the Italian jobby. Here the control system is slightly different – left means that you go northwest rather than west, and you can't press two directions at once – but the game is very similar. Viewed from above, you drive through various terrains (California Beach Race, Rocky Mountain Pass and so on) in your turbo-charged, armour-plated supercar, which for some reason goes not a great deal faster than a C5. As in *Italian Super Car*, you have things firing at you,

MOUNTAIN BIKE RACER

Zeppelin/£2.99

A real oddity here. On first glance it's a dodo – dead from the neck up. Once again, we're off on a bicycle race across the nastiest conceivable terrain with the naffest possible bike. Good idea? I'd prefer to take a bus myself, but then there aren't many *Four Stops On The No. 17 Simulators* and I can think of a good few reasons why not. *MBR*, meanwhile, shapes up like a loser – it's not amazingly fast, its graphics are dullsville, and the gameplay seems mundane to say the least. But... but... well, it's just got to be butter.

The trick lies in working how to take every new bit of terrain. Some need to be attacked at high speed. Others, not

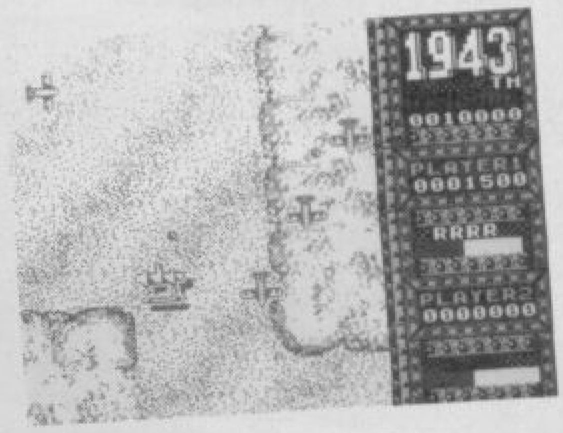


appreciably smaller, need to be approached at the speed of a tortoise on Night Nurse. There's no real sense to it, and to be honest it has as much relation to real life as I do to Jeremy Beadle. But there's something about this game nonetheless. Not, of course, that originality rears its beautiful bonce anywhere hereabouts. Good Lord no. *MBR* is older than Mike Gerrard and twice as bearded. No matter – there's something curiously addictive about this simple little game, and I suspect that many Spec-chums will enjoy it.

1943™

Kixx/£2.99

"A novel approach to a shoot-'em-up," we said last time round. (At least I assume we did – that's what it claims on the cassette inlay.) Personally I've not seen this before – I've heard of it on reputation – and in fact I was a little disappointed. Taking the vertical-scrolling shooter format, Capcom adapted it to a World War II scenario, and the Battle Of Midway in particular. Not heard of the Battle Of Midway? Tut tut. Charlton Heston was in it, as any fule kno. In this version there aren't any ships as such, just loadsa planes, one of which is yours and the rest Japanese. Unfortunately they're not of a kamikaze inclination, and are just as keen as you to stay alive, but unlike you they have only one life (you seem to have loads), which is rather tough luck on them. This interesting new angle aside, though, what we have here is very much a standard shoot-'em-up. Knock down the waves, collect extra weapons, then, after you've disposed of all the little nasties, a great mothership turns up and fires billions of bullets at you. Sounds familiar? It's only the plot for every shooter

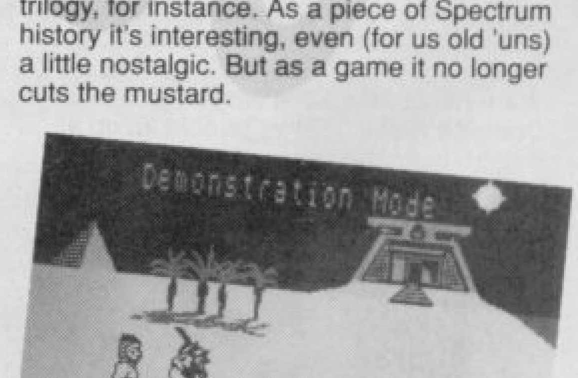


in the past four years, that's all, and *1943* (not forgetting the ™ – this year's got a copyright on it, folks) differs from it not a jot. Fab, therefore, if you've always wanted to play a space zapper in World War II clothing, but rather dull if you were looking for, say, a new idea. Nicely programmed, but in this case that's not enough.

FIGHTING WARRIOR

Mastertronic/£2.99

I thought this rang a bell, but it wasn't until I loaded it up and saw the dread words "© Melbourne House 1985" that the ghastly truth dawned on me with the force of a small nuclear explosion. AAAAAAAARRRGGHH! Yes, it was a cheesy old beat-'em-up. And not just any old cheese, either – fine, smelly, slightly green old cheddar, of the sort that mice just gobble up. For its time, admittedly, this was impressive – large sprites, a scenario that made no mention of Japan or China (it's set in ancient Egypt instead), and simple, no-holds-barred violence throughout. No surprises that it sold well, but nowadays it looks more than a mite ropey. For one thing, we like a little more to our fighting games these days – think of the *Renegade* trilogy, for instance. As a piece of Spectrum history it's interesting, even (for us old 'uns) a little nostalgic. But as a game it no longer cuts the mustard.

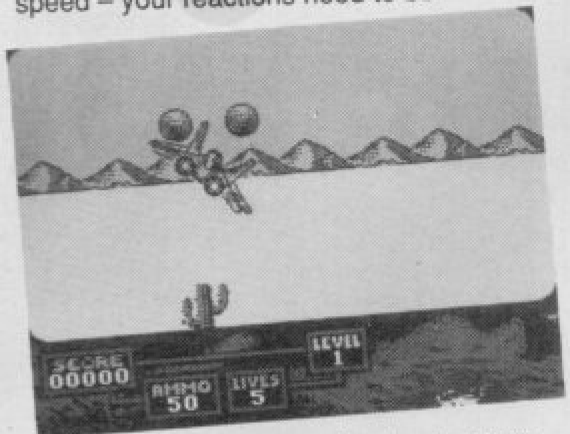


BARGAINS

F-16 FIGHTING FALCON

Mastertronic/£1.99

Another game to be played with Mastertronic's exciting new Magnum Lightphaser (I wonder how much that costs – more than £2.99, no doubt...). But strip away the gripping new technological requirements, and underneath it's just another aircraft combat game, with few differences, if any, from nine billion similar games we've seen in the past. True, your F-16 does beetle over four different scenarios – Sahara, Tropical, Arctic and Ocean – but, graphical backgrounds aside, there's not as much variety to it as there initially seems. What there is is immense speed – your reactions need to be

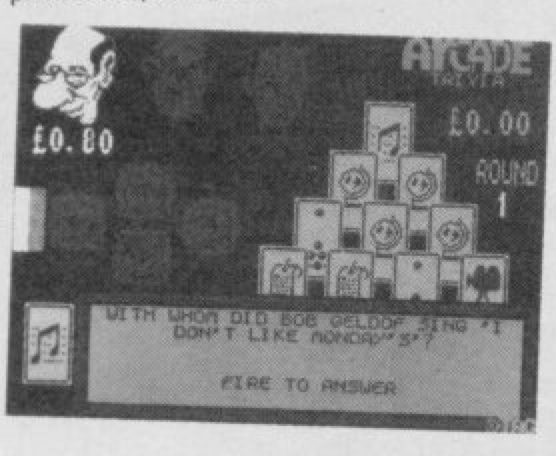


incredibly fast and it's really dead easy to get killed. Quite what difference the Magnum Lightphaser™ makes I can't tell you, but with joystick or keyboard it's very much business-as-usual. Shoot them down before they shoot you, and all will be well.

ARCADE TRIVIA QUIZ

Zeppelin/£2.99

I was a bit concerned about this one, especially when I read on the inlay notes "Imagine the thrills, colour, noise and excitement of the arcade quiz machine on your very own home computer and you'll go some way towards realising just how exciting *Arcade Trivia Quiz* on your Amstrad really is". Happily, though, it does load up, and it isn't at all bad. There are loads of these trivia jobbies around now, of course, but the success of the pub games does seem finally to have buried the *Trivial Pursuit* approach, where they print the answer and you press Y if you got it right. Here there's a much more user-friendly multiple-choice format, and you need to be on the ball to prosper. Not only do you need to be fast when answering questions, but when picking them as well – otherwise you get some ghastly geography question instead of a nice friendly pop music one. Questions are not that easy (especially the date ones) and doing very well takes much practice. Spelling is as terrible as on all



trivia games, but then if programmers could spell they wouldn't be programmers, would they? Up to three can play, and the whole design is simple and neat.

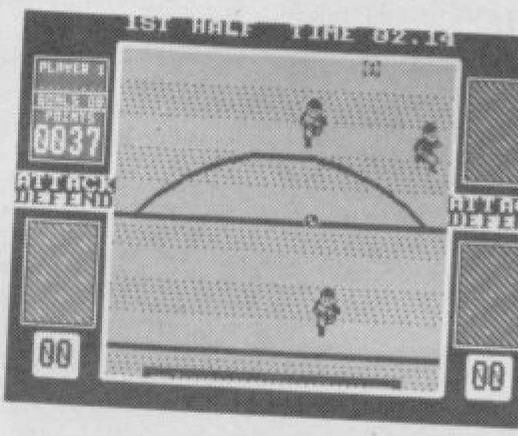
4 SOCCER SIMULATORS

CodeMasters/£2.99

'Gasp! It seems like only 18 months ago that this was out on full price. *(It was only 18 months ago, you clot. Ed)* It was CodeMasters' first entry in the blockbuster market, and the fact that it didn't exactly revolutionise their release policy shows how well it must have done. But actually, for what amounts to just another attempt to out-Match Day *Match Day*, it's nobbad at all.

Of course there aren't really four soccer simulators at all – there's one basic model with variations – but it's quality not quantity that matters here. For instead of aping *Match Day* like every other soccer sim under the glowing orb, these CodeMaster laddies have flipped the whole thing 90° first this way and then that way, giving us a bird's-eye view from above. Otherwise of course the gameplay is much the same as normal, and anyone who's sampled any of the other sims should have no trouble working this one out.

The variations too are novel. Game One



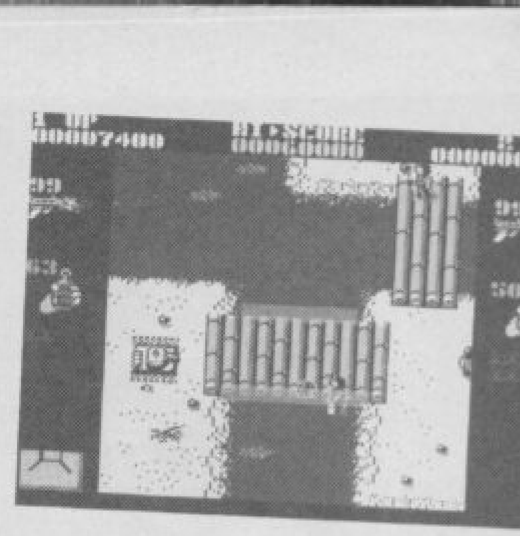
is a full 11-a-side football match, while Game Two scythes this down to an indoor five-a-side game. Game Three is even less formal – it's Street Soccer, played in your very own back yard, complete with cars, houses and trees to punt the ball into. The final game is not really a soccer sim at all, but a Soccer Skills exercise session, both for practice and against the clock.

Needless to say, all this is breathtaking value at three nicker. It still doesn't touch *Match Day 2*, of course, but then it doesn't really attempt to – the overhead perspective makes it a quite different game. On me 'ead, lad, on me 'ead.

IKARI WARRIORS

Encore/£2.99

This was an enormous hit the last time it came out – a big number one on all charts. Personally, though, I thought it was deadly dull – a middling arcade game converted by Elite with little apparent imagination or flair. The cover artwork says it all, really – two geezers with rippling muscles and machine guns killing everyone within reasonable range. Good clean fun, I hear you cry, and you'd be right, but the amazing lack of variety in the game eventually sent me into a deep coma, from which only the loving care of a series of trained Filipino nurses helped me escape. In the arcade game, some nifty graphics distracted you from the



essential dullness of the game, but the poor old Spectrum's tiny stick-figures and unbelievably slow bullets don't really seem the same. Serious zzzz time, and not helped by the fact that you need an electron microscope to read the inlay notes.

THE RACE

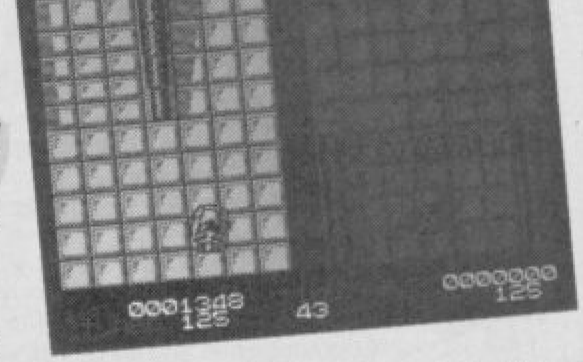
Players Premier/£2.99

You may know a bit about this one already – after all, we ran a playable demo of the first level on one of our Smash Tapes recently (March 1990 to be precise). It's a two-player vertically-scrolling racing game, something along the lines of *Spy Hunter* or the more recent *Action Fighter*, with the screen divided firmly into two halves, so the two cars don't interact at all as such. Drawn in metallic-look mononchrome, it's visually reminiscent of the Speccy *Xenon* more than anything else, and for a vertical scroller it's exceptionally easy on the eye – at no point do the little cars get lost in over-ambitious backgrounds, as is so often the case.

It plays very well too, in a limited sort of way. There's no side-to-side movement of the play area, but the vertical scrolling is exceptionally fast and smooth, with the cars responding very sharply to the controls.

What you have to do is simple in the extreme – complete each of the six courses in as short a time as possible. To do this you need to keep a beady eye on the arrows that mark out a suggested route (or else you'll end up smashing straight into solid wall) and also position your finger close by the turbo switch for that extra bit of boost you'll need when making a particularly long jump using one of the stunt ramps. Yep, it's just like a futuristic version of *The Dukes Of Hazzard*!

If pure reaction games are your bag you could do a lot worse than pick this up – in fact, you might be planning to already. For the rest of you, why not check out that demo again for another quick look? It's really pretty good, you know.



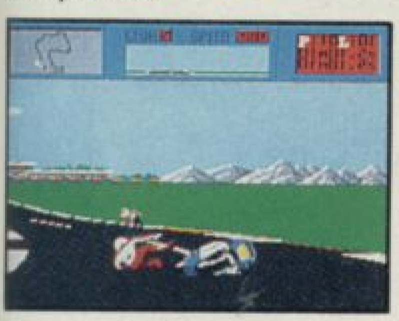
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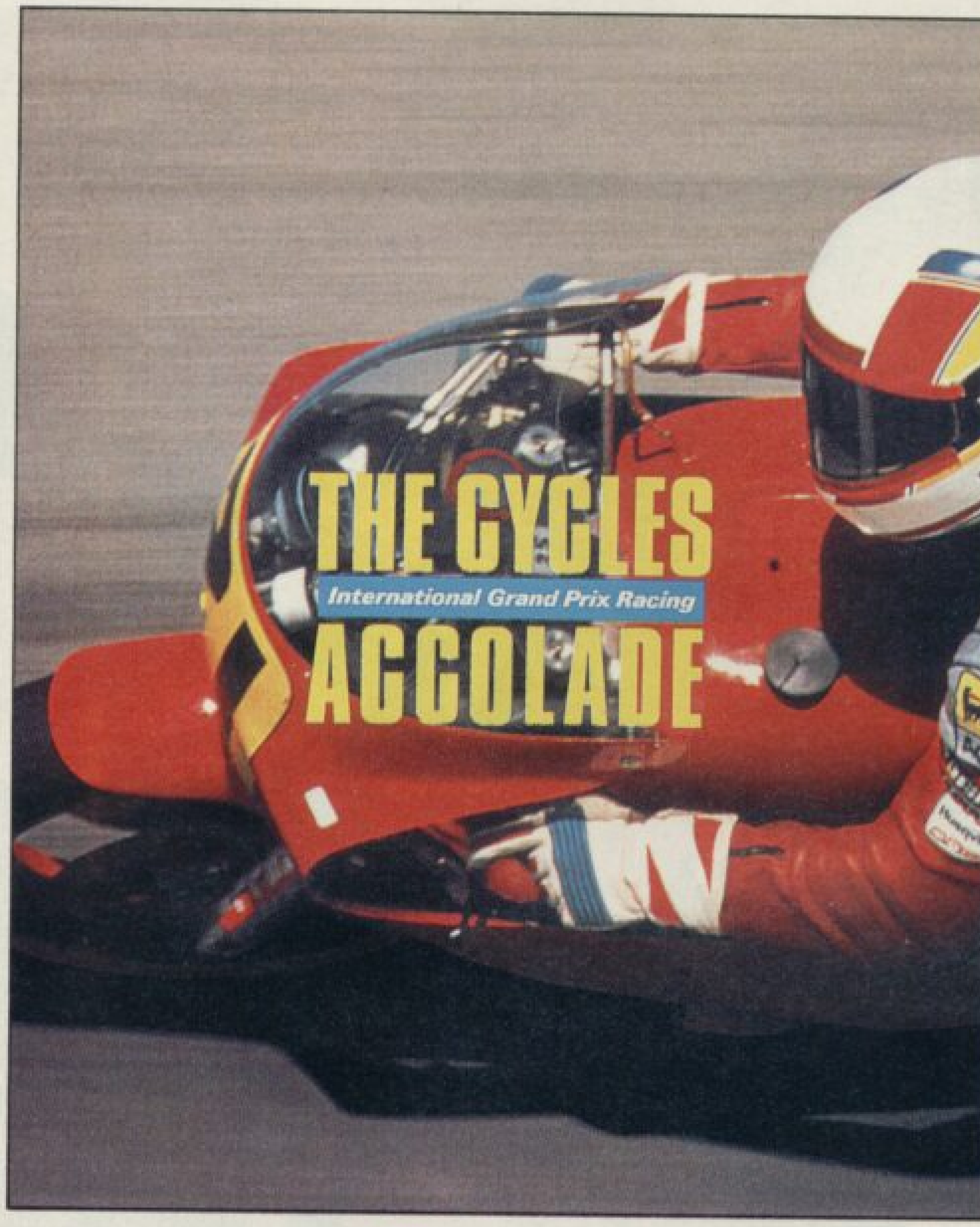
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Screen shots from IBM P.C. version.



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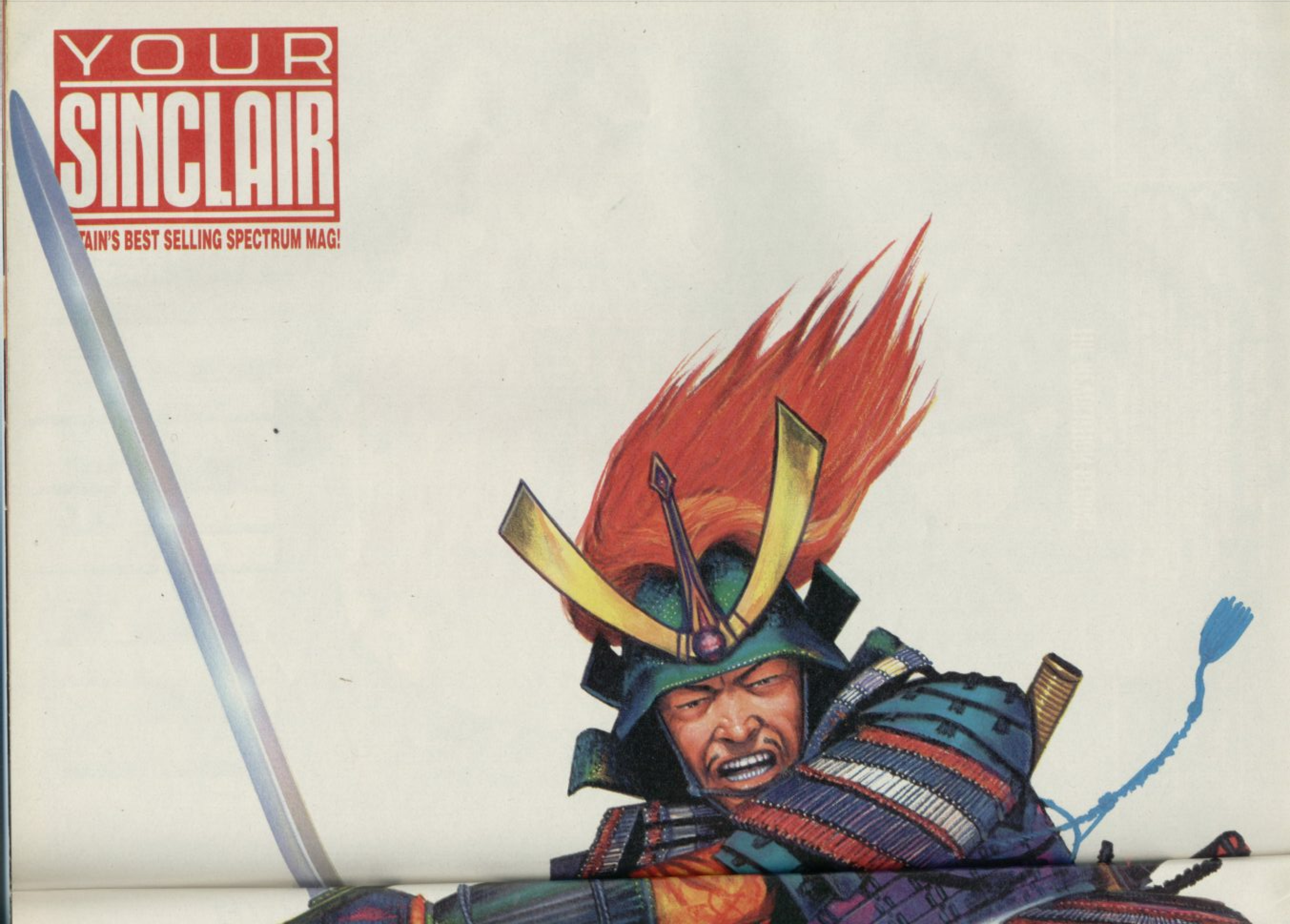
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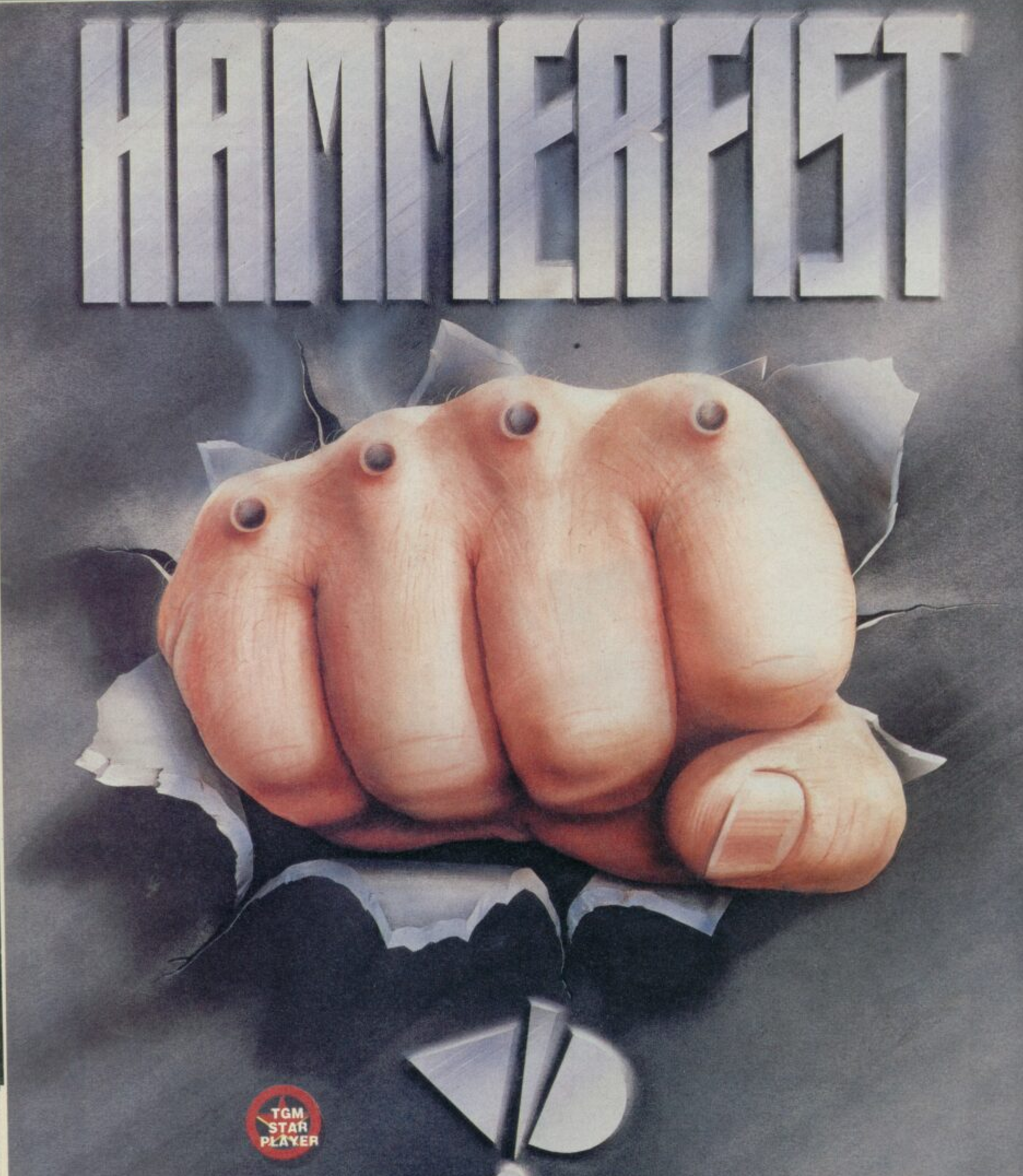


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Two of the deadliest, Hammerfist and Metalisis were ready for assignment; to dispense death and destruction under the evil instruction of Centro-Holographix.
They were political puppets, dangerous and skilled murderers who followed their binary politics to the letter – their masters didn't even consider the possibilities of a malfunction... especially one that would turn Hammerfist and Metalisis against the hand that fed them...





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YS GAMES OF THE YEAR '89

A bit late perhaps (the 'big move' meant we didn't have enough time to fit them in last month), but here, at long last, are the *YS* reviewers' choices for Game Of The Year 1989!! Hurrah! Each of our Jugglers has put on his (or her) thinking cap, mulled everything over, made a couple of complete guesses, then come up with a list of five fave raves from last year. But that's not all, 'cos we've then averaged them all out to come up with an overall list of winners. What will they be? Find out over the page!

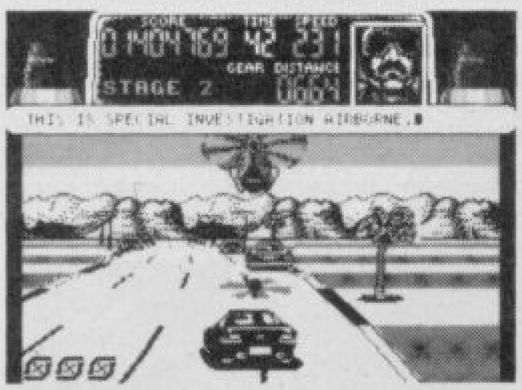


DAVID

Top Five Of '89
1. *Chase HQ*/Ocean
2. *Carrier Command* /Rainbird
3. *Myth*/System 3
4. *Stunt Car Racer*/MicroProse
5. *Time Scanner*/Activision

Duffer Of '89
DNA Warrior/Aartronic

Probably no surprises there, eh, Specchums? Still, although Speccy games really came on apace last year with a lot of very impressive things appearing,



many people seemed to forsake playability a bit for the sake of groovy graphics. With the games I've picked then I've tried to make sure they look good, yes, but play well too. Just like, for instance, *Chase HQ*. It really was the business, wasn't it? A brilliant car racing game, and a very slick conversion, with excellent sound and 128K digitised speech!

Carrier Command was another classic, though unfortunately available on 128 only. A massive strategy game with brilliant vector graphics, it let you control ships, tanks and even planes – yes, there was a flight sim stuffed in there somehow too! Enough playability to keep you busy for yonks!

What else? Well, System 3's *Myth* came in at the tail end of the year, but what a classic game! Great puzzles and fun to boot, it was hugely colourful, hugely playable and, erm, hugely huge! *Time Scanner* (an August *YS* Megagame, reviewed by yours truly, hem, hem) still holds a lot of lasting two-player-bility for me, even ten months on. Incidently, the Speccy version was better than any other format I saw!

Oh, and the duffer of the year? Well, there were some pretty ropey games out there, but I reckon Aartronic's *DNA Warrior* was the winner by a nose – an extraordinarily unoriginal side-view shoot-'em-up in which your little white spaceship was pitted against lots of little white baddies that looked like Trebor mints (snore).



MATT

Top Five Of '89
1. *Stunt Car Racer*/MicroProse
2. *The New Zealand Story*/Ocean
3. *Chase HQ*/Ocean
4. *The Untouchables*/Ocean
5. *Myth*/System 3

Duffer Of '89
Grand Prix Master/Dinamic

I feel a bit funny doing this, because I basically made the same selection three issues ago in the *YS 50th Issue Birthday* feature, so I'll keep it brief. And – what do you know!? – my choice of favourite games hasn't changed much since!

Apologies then to these guys who very nearly made it – Rainbird for the gigantic and impressive *Carrier Command*, which I unfortunately never got into properly (but only through lack of time); Activision for popular office fave *Time Scanner*, US Gold, Virgin and so on for some excellent coin-op conversions like *Strider* and *Silkworm*, plus lots (and lots) of others.

But what about the ones I did choose? Well, *The NZ Story* was my favourite platform-and-ladders cutsie game, *The Untouchables* the most complete and together film conversion (to my mind better than the also-excellent *Batman*),



Myth the nicest surprise, *Chase HQ* the best of the Xmas games, and *Stunt Car Racer* the most original, best-executed idea of them all – a real gem.

Choosing the worst game is pretty tricky too – there were loads of 'em! I nearly picked *Rock Star* from the Codies (for being unforgivingly unfunny), *The Duel* from Accolade (tedious), and *Dominator* from System 3 (pretty but hardly playtested at all). And what about *Buffalo Bill's Rodeo Games* from Tynesoft and Virgin's *Aargh!* – both just totally crap in almost every department! Worst of the worst though? Well, I eventually plumped for Dinamic's *Grand Prix Master*, not because it was badly programmed or anything, but simply because it was so ridiculously hard! Nobody in the office could qualify for a race, let alone win the thing! Hopeless!!



SEAN

Top Five Of '89
1. ***Batman The Movie*/Ocean**
2. ***Stormlord*/Hewson**
3. ***Rick Dangerous*/Firebird**
4. ***Xenon*/Melbourne House**
5. ***The Untouchables*/Ocean**

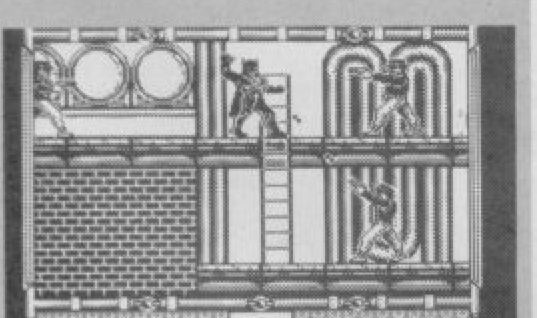
Duffer Of '89
***Aargh!*/Virgin**

Bit of a vintage year for arcade adventures all told, with three absolute corkers in *Batman*, *Stormlord* and *Rick Dangerous*. Ocean has really set itself apart from the common herd when it comes to movie conversions, and I reckon *Batman* just about pips *The Untouchables* as the greatest movie conversion ever made. *(What a load of rubbish: Ed)* What a totally fab combination of mapping and bashing! *Stormlord*, courtesy of Raf Cecco, was, again, a totally original and addictive arcade adventure. And *Rick Dangerous* was just fab – seeing the poor chappy's comical death throws almost made 'buying the farm' a pleasure.

Each of these games caught a perfect balance between making you want to smash in your Speccy and saying "Oh, blimmin' heck, I'll just have one more go."

Xenon was a real rip-snorting blaster from Melbourne House, out in early '89. With the smoothest scrolling ever, decent sound and billions of aliens to obliterate, this was a absolute barg at eight quid! And finally *The Untouchables* – an absolutely brilliant blend of blasting and dodging, with loads and loads of sections, and one of the very few games that comes close to capturing the atmosphere of its original movie.

As for *Aargh!*, I can quite honestly say



that whoever made the decision to put this heap of crap on sale should feel very ashamed. When they die God's going to get out his book and go,"Yes, good... Yes, we'll let you in... Oh. Hang about. You're the one responsible for *Aargh!*? That puts a very different complexion on things..." *(Blimey. Steady on, Sean. Ed)*



DUNCAN

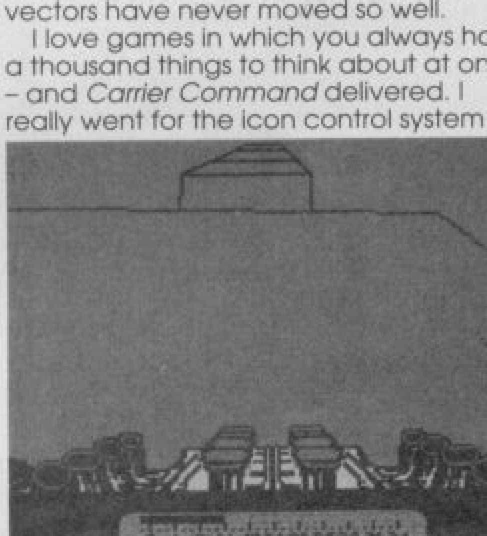
Top Five Of '89
1. ***Stunt Car Racer*/MicroStyle**
2. ***Carrier Command*/Rainbird**
3. ***Chase HQ*/Ocean**
4. ....
5. ....

(Oh dear oh dear, Duncan's done it all wrong again. Ed)

Biggest Pile Of Crap Of '89
***Advanced Lawnmower Simulator* (*YS* Smash Tape September '89)**

Mmm, *Stunt Car Racer*. Well, what can I say? I could say "B-huh", but it wouldn't make very much sense, so what I'll say instead is "Wow, the Speccy came up trumps again with its fast processor speed!" – meaning a brilliant 16-bit game became a brilliant 8-bit game. Filled vectors have never moved so well.

I love games in which you always have a thousand things to think about at once – and *Carrier Command* delivered. I really went for the icon control system



too. A perfect blend of strategy and blasting skills, *CC* was a sort of flight, tank *and* ship simulator rolled into one. F.A.B!

The Speccy version of *Chase HQ* was better than both the ST and Amiga versions. Brilliant programming. The graphics were 100% brilliant, the sound was 100% brilliant and the animation was 100% brilliant. All in all, er, 300% brilliant!

Right, onto the crap game then. *(What about the other two? Ed)* Eh? *(Four and five. Ed)* Oh cripes – four and five, forgot about them. Er... Help! Help! I can't think of any more! I'll owe you a mega favour. You can even have my car. (Um, actually maybe that's a bit rash. Anyway, the engine's broken, so it'd cost you £300 to get a new one put in.) *(How about The Untouchables? Ed)* Yes, yes, that'll do, number four is *The Untouchables*. And number five...? *(Batman? Myth? Rick Dangerous? Ed)* Yes! *Rick Dangerous*! Two excellent games – couldn't stop playing either of them! (Will that do?)

Er, now the crap game (and *I* wrote the bally thing!) – *Advanced Lawn... (Too late. You've run out of space. Ed)*



JACKIE

Top Five Of '89
1. ***Stunt Car Racer*/MicroProse**
2. ***The Untouchables*/Ocean**
3. ***Silkworm*/Virgin**
4. ***Rick Dangerous*/Firebird**
5. ***Time Scanner*/Activision**

Duffer Of '89
***Grand Prix Master*/Dinamic**

Bliminey, what a year that was, eh, readers? Best of the bunch had to be *Stunt Car Racer* from MicroProse. Talk about a really original concept! But what made it even better was that it brought a whole new approach to the tired old genre of car racing games. I loved it, and am still furiously racing around the Stepping Stones trying to beat Jumping Jack Flash (or whatever he was called).

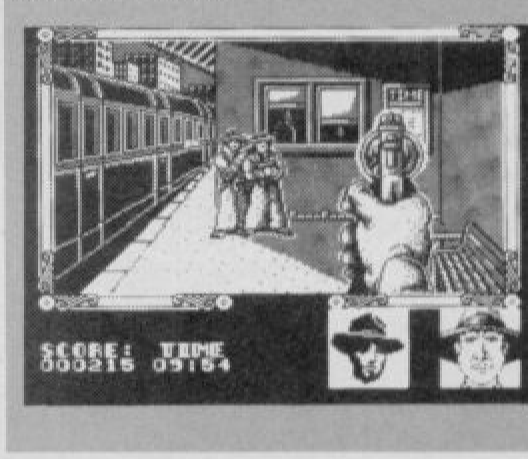
Next on my list of fave raves has to be *The Untouchables* from Ocean. What a brill film tie-in it turned out to be, stuffed to the gills with oodles of playability, smart gameplay sequences, neat graphics and that brill shoot-out on the bridge level.

And talking of shoot-outs, worrabout *Silkworm* from Virgin/Mastertronic? Not a particularly original game I know, but one of the fabbest, fastest, most mindless shoot-'em-ups of last year. My number three, methinks.

Okay, okay, I know I gave Firebird's *Rick Dangerous* a bit of a measly 79 when I first reviewed it, but it was a definite grower. A fab dodge-'em, pause-'em *(Eh? Ed)* and shoot-'em-up, it turned out to be one of the jolliest arcade adventures I'd ever seen. Alright, I admit it, I was wrong.

And finally – *Time Scanner*. A brill pinball sim from Activision, it worked a lot better than expected, and kept all of us in the office flexing our dodgy pinball fingers throughout most of the summer.

Then there was *Grand Prix Master*. Aaargh! It was the most uninspiring, unplayable and graphically unimaginative game of all last year. More like *Grand Prix Complete And Utter Disaster* I reckon!

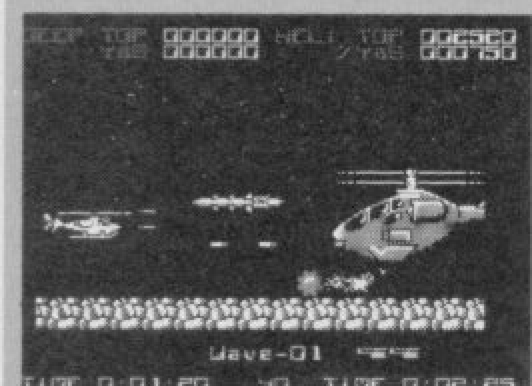




RICH

Top Five Of '89
1. *Silkworm*/Virgin
2. *Chase HQ*/Ocean
3. *Xenon*/Melbourne House
4. *Operation Thunderbolt*/Ocean
5. *Carrier Command*/Rainbird

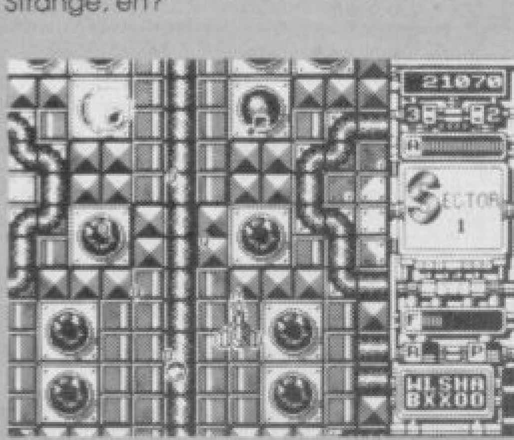
Duffer Of '89
***Syntax*/Blue Ribbond**



Effective graphics, simple gameplay and loadsa addictiveness. What more could a man ask for out of life? *(A salary increase would be nice. Ed) Silkworm*, I loved it! Here was a game that showed that not everything these days has to be a huge multiload conversion to be any cop. Unlike *Op Thundy* and *Chase HQ*, that is. How does Ocean do it? Wacky graphics, speed, even an attempt at sound – it's a bloomin' miracle if you ask me.

Almost as amazing is how on earth my fave ST rave, *Xenon*, crawled its way onto the humble Spectrum. Any good? I thought not at first, but was forced to eat my words 'cos, boy, was I wrong! And as for *Carrier Command*... I liked it! Me, of all people! I normally *loathe* simulations!

Anyway, that's me done, except for my nomination for naffest game of the year which goes to *Syntax* by Blue Ribbond. The weird thing is, though, it's so bad I'm beginning to actually enjoy it. Strange, eh?





ROBIN

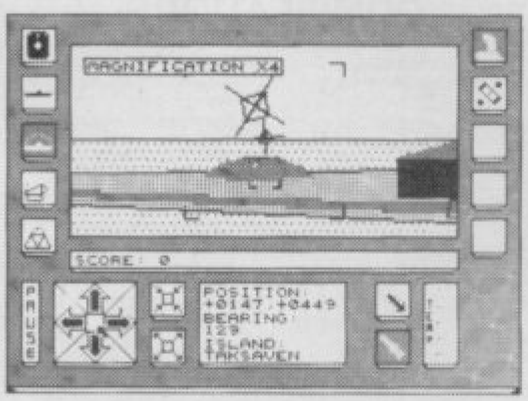
Top Five Of '89
1. *Carrier Command*/Rainbird
2. *Chase HQ*/Ocean
3. *Stunt Car Racer*/MicroProse
4. *The Untouchables*/Ocean
5. *Batman The Movie*/Ocean

Duffer Of '89
***Sporting Triangles*/CDS**

'Hmmmm', 'Ummmm', and a few '......'s sum up '89 for me. Though the crop of games was decidedly bumper and, for the most part, slickly programmed, originality was a bit thin on the ground, with the combined digitized toupée/knitware count of sporting and showbiz stars dangerously high.

If it wasn't for *Carrier Command* my cheery reviewer's leer might have been lost forever. This was a perfect mix of simulation, strategy and shoot-'em-up with a playing area so vast it was almost rude. And the best bit was that it turned out to be just as playable on the Speccy as on any other version! Hurrah! Along with the (almost) equally impressive and gasp-inducing *Stunt Car Racer* it just went to show how our aged 8-bit buddy can stay with most 16-bit Megagames when it really tries.

Chase HQ couldn't have come without a struggle either but the finished



product turned out to be a real furry-dice-jiggling affair and far more exciting to drive than many a real-life car (my Dad's FSO for one).

The last two are ample proof that licenced games can work so long as the design and programming's sound enough. Both *The Untouchables* and *Batman* had dodgy sections in their multiloads but overall went to prove (if any more proof was necessary) just how consistent Ocean is at turning top films into equally successful games.

Duffer? Well, until Mike Morris and the cast of TV-AM appear in pixelised form, it's got to be *Sporting Triangles* – the most boring, unappealing, bogawful game I've ever seen. Pretty faithful to the original TV programme, in fact.



JONATHAN

Top Five of '89
1. *Cabal*/Ocean
2. *Carrier Command*/Rainbird
3. *Xenon*/Melbourne House
4. *Christmas Collection*/Hewson
5. *War In Middle Earth*/Melbourne House

Duffer of '89
***Rock Star Ate My Hamster*/CodeMasters**

Erm, blimey, I dunno. How about that *Cabal*, then? It was completely brilliant, wasn't it, and one of the few conversions I've seen that's actually better than the arcade original. In some ways, at least.

Then there was *Carrier Command*, which I played for whole months at a time on the ST, and was probably even better on the Speccy. More 'cuddly' I think. *Xenon* also arrived via the S... *(Oi! Enough of that. Ed)*, erm, and perhaps if I mention it every one will think I'm really good at it. Probably not, actually, but it was an excellent game all the same. Er, Hewson's *Christmas Collection*? Do compilations count? *(No. Ed)* Oh. It was really good though.

Well that just leaves *War In Middle Earth* then. I can't say I actually played it, but it looked really good. All strategic and everything. Good for the image. *(Look, do you want to keep working for this mag or not? Ed)*

And the worst game of 1989 was, of course, the Codies' *Rock Star Ate My Hamster*. Not due to any shortcomings in the programming, but simply because the whole idea of the thing was so diabolical. Funny? That? Don't make me laugh. (And they didn't.)

THE OVERALL WINNERS!!

Golly gosh! What a diverse bunch! Still, let's award each game five points for every time it gets a first choice vote, four points for a second and so on, then add them all up and what do we get? Why, this of course!

1. ***Stunt Car Racer***
2. ***Chase HQ***
3. ***Carrier Command***
4. ***The Untouchables***
5. ***Xenon***

So, well done, *Stunt Car*! (We always knew you'd do it.) But what a close-run thing, eh, Spec-chums? Our fave rave of the year may well have notched up an impressive 20 points but both *Chase HQ* and *Carrier Command* stuck in there admirably, snapping away at its heels with a respective 19 and 18 points. Hurrah!

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SWITCHBLADE

Gremlin really seems to be on a roll at the moment, doesn't it, Specchums? First there's the long-awaited return of Monty Mole (see the review this ish) and then, hot on its heels, *Switchblade*, a tidy little platform and ladders romp with bags of promise. *Matt 'Nosey' Bielby* sneaked backstage for a closer look.

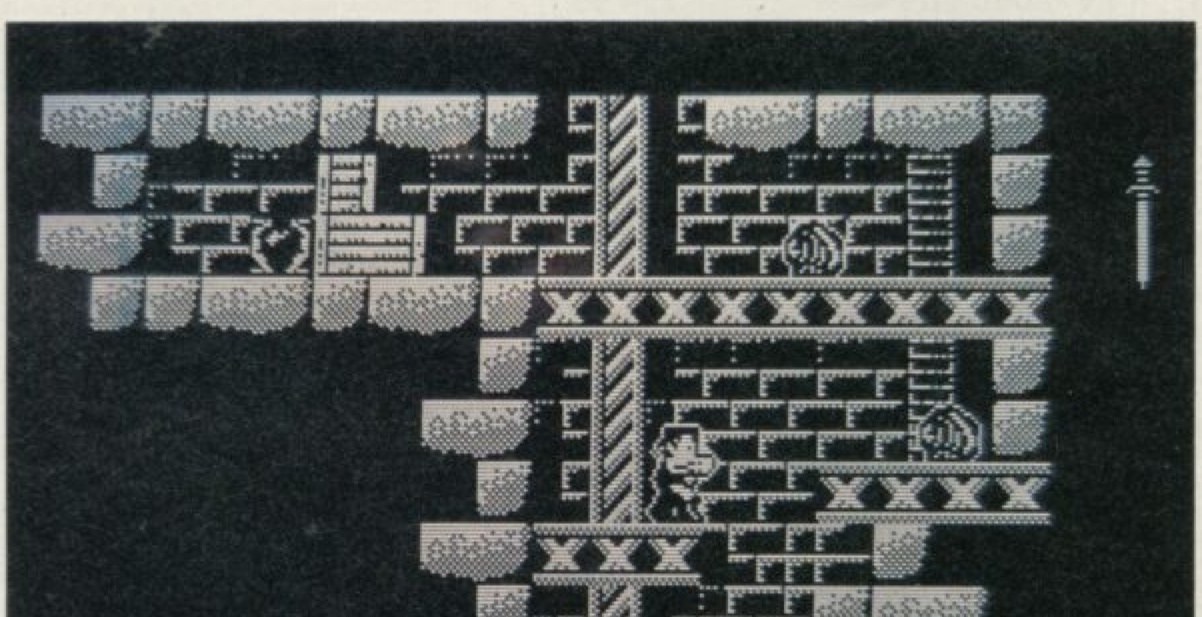
First off, take a look at the screenshots – notice anything familiar? No? Well, what if I was to tell you that *Switchblade* has been developed by the same team at Core Design that came up with the rather fabulous *Rick Dangerous* last year (see Game Of The Year feature), not to mention the more recently revamped Monty Mole? A-ha! Lightbulbs light up over your heads. That's about as good a pedigree as platform games get, and should mean (barring floods, fires and acts of God) that *Switchblade*'s gonna be a bit of a corker. But before we take a closer look I think there's one rather important question we should ask – 'Just who is this Switchblade character anyway?'.



He's not called 'Switchblade'

Switchblade's name isn't actually Switchblade at all – in fact, it's Hiro. Unlike Rick Dangerous, who was an all-American Indiana Jones sort of chappie, Hiro is a big-eyed Japanese fellow (like Marine Boy, Akira and so on), dressed in a sort of futuristic kung fu outfit crossed with a Judge Dredd uniform (big shoulder pads and so on).

If you can bear a quick smattering of plot, he's the last of the Bladeknights, a bunch of warriors from the peaceful but totally destroyed land of Thraxx. Havoc, the bloke responsible for trashing his homeland, has also shattered the Fireblade, a historic weapon rather important to Hiro's people, and left it scattered throughout the Undercity. So, surprise surprise, that's where our Hiro has to go to collect all the bits. All's well and good so far, except (eek!) that very same Undercity happens to be just the place Havoc and his minions have decided to hang out, so Hiro's forced to head straight into the middle of enemy territory. Blimey!



See that big black area to the left there? It's probably another room (and I've missed it!).

He can perform a wide range of fighting moves!

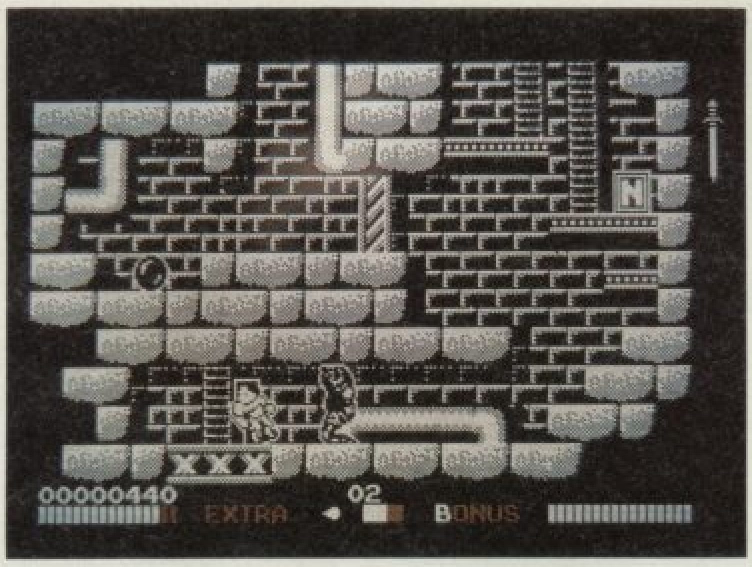
Indeed he can! For a start, there's Hiro's punch (fairly weak, but he can throw a lot of them quite quickly which makes up for it – it's usually the best move to use when fighting more than one enemy). Then we have the high kick – this is more powerful, but takes longer to aim and activate. And finally, there's the slow but mega-powerful (well, fairly powerful) low kick, which can get rid of loads of enemies with only one blow (in fact, there are some short, squat baddies who can only be hit using this method). Choosing which move you want to use is simplicity itself – instead of a complex pattern of joystick movements/key commands, it all operates on an *R-Type*-like energy bar system. Jab the fire button fast and the bar doesn't have time to fill up at all (so you just get the punch) but hold it down for a second before releasing it and it'll build up power – enough for a high kick or, if you wait long enough for it to fill all the way up, a low one. Simplicity itself, non? These aren't the only weapons Hiro gets to use though, but we'll have a

look at the others in a minute.

He's got very deep pockets!

Indeed, he must have, since there are a hundred and one things to collect spread around the Underworld and Hiro manages to carry them all! Most of them are pretty well-hidden though – the game is a labyrinth of interconnecting rooms, a good number of which you can only find by kicking down false walls to reveal hidden doorways. Some of the innocent-looking wall blocks which don't reveal secret passages are still worth a good kicking though – they can reveal any number of collectable goodies (in fact, in this way it's just like one of those ace Japanese arcade or console games, absolutely packed to the gills with secret things to find).

Things worth having include energy-giving capsules (useful, because if Hiro sees his energy bar drop to zero five times the mission's over), guns, firebomb launchers and other weapons (these only last a short time, unfortunately), extra health and lives, and add-ons for your cyber-arm (didn't I tell you, Hiro has a sort of removable bionic fist extension thing?). Then, of course, there are the 16 pieces of the Fireblade to be found too, which are normally just lying around the place in full view.

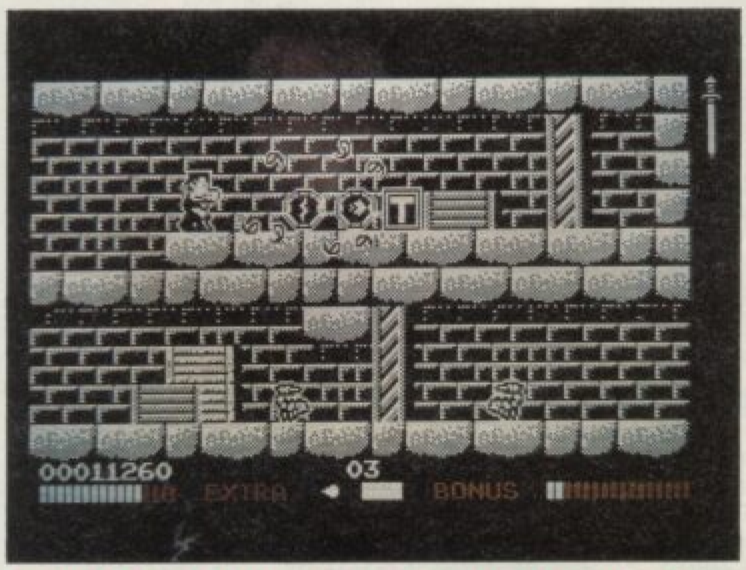


Yes, as you've probably gathered, all the screenshots in this game look almost exactly the same. In this one, Hiro's being attacked by a giant prawn (or is it a cobra?). Don't ask me!

He's good at turning lights on!

Part of what makes *Switchblade* such an atmospheric and exciting game to play is the mystery of not knowing what you're coming to next. You see, Hiro (and so you) can only actually see the parts of the Undercity he's been in, with the rest of the screen remaining a mysterious black. Right, where do I go next, he thinks, taking a couple of kicks at the walls. Bingo! He stumbles across one of those wall-blocks-that-looks-like-every-other-wall-block-but-actually-turns-out-to-be-a-door and he's through into another room! Hurrah! The lights come on (thus revealing the full extent of the room for the first time) and – whadayaknow? – there's a ladder leading down through the floor at bottom of it, into yet more mysterious darkness. So let's go down it, shall we, and what do we find? Another room! But this one's full of monsters! Yikes! I'm off back up that ladder sharpish! (And so on.)

The only problem with all this is that you might well find yourself climbing down past several rooms you really should be going into and collecting things from, except you haven't even discovered that they're there yet! So, rule number one – don't rush anything! Take it in your own good time, suss out your surroundings and see what the possibilities are (you'll be glad you did). And, anyway, all this discovering secret rooms stuff is actually very exciting, and as addictive as anything!



Blimey! I don't know what's going on here at all! There are some pick-upable doobries there, but goodness knows what those wiggly jobbies are!



Yikes! It looks to me like there's a spooky alien bird monster over to the right there (I think I'd better avoid it). Looks like there are a few collectables around too.

KNIFEMEN

Simon Phipps is the chap behind *Switchblade*, which he started working on in January a good two years ago! Why's it taken so long to finish the Speccy version then, Simes? "Because I was doing it in my spare time, that's why! This was before we even formed Core (Simon's development company) and before *Rick Dangerous* got off the ground. We approached Firebird with the storyboards to that game in about June, so by the time we actually started programming *Rick*, we'd already had *Switchblade* underway for a good six months."

Switchblade feels very much like a Japanese console game. Is that where all the ideas for it came from? "In the main, yes. It was a sort of mixture of my reading *Login* (gigantically thick Japanese video game mag) and other things I'm interested in like *Cyberpunk* novels, *Blade Runner*, Japanese comics such as *Akira* and things like that – it was a very personal project. There are lots of hidden rooms and secret stuff all over the place, because I've included all my favourite bits from the classic platform games in there somewhere. There are 128 screens in the 8-bit ones (same as the 16-bits) and each has around four large areas of screen that can be blacked off, so you can't see anything you haven't explored yet – it's a brilliant idea which I swiped straight from *Ranarama*, and I don't care!

"As for the Speccy version, well, I was meant to be doing the graphics and so on for that too, but in the end I just didn't have time with all my other commitments and everything (*Monty Python* for Virgin and *Rick Dangerous 2* for MicroProse). Gremlin got someone else to do the Spectrum version instead, but I don't know who it is. You'd better ask them."

Indeed we'd better, and who should it turn out to be but one Jeff Calder, a freelance programmer responsible for a number of budget games, as well as Firebird's *3D Pool* on the Spectrum. How's your conversion going to differ from the 16-bit, Jeff?

"Hardly at all actually, apart from the graphics. We've got all 128 rooms in it, and the game plays all the way through (it isn't split up into levels or anything) without the need for a multiload, which is a boon." Indeed. How are the graphics looking?

"Well, take a look at the screenshots. There are bits of colour flashed about, in particular on the walls and things, but the actual play area is mainly monochrome. The map's exactly the same as the 16-bit though and everthing's positioned in exactly the same places, so it should play identically. And since *Switchblade* is such a playable game anyway, it should turn out very good indeed. I'm very pleased."

Excellent, and by the look of things so should we! Keep your eyes peeled, Spec-chums!

FAX BOX

Game	*Switchblade*
Publisher	Gremlin
Developers	Core Design/Jeff Calder
Price	£9.99 cass/£14.99 disk
Release Date	Mid June



Activision/£9.99 cass



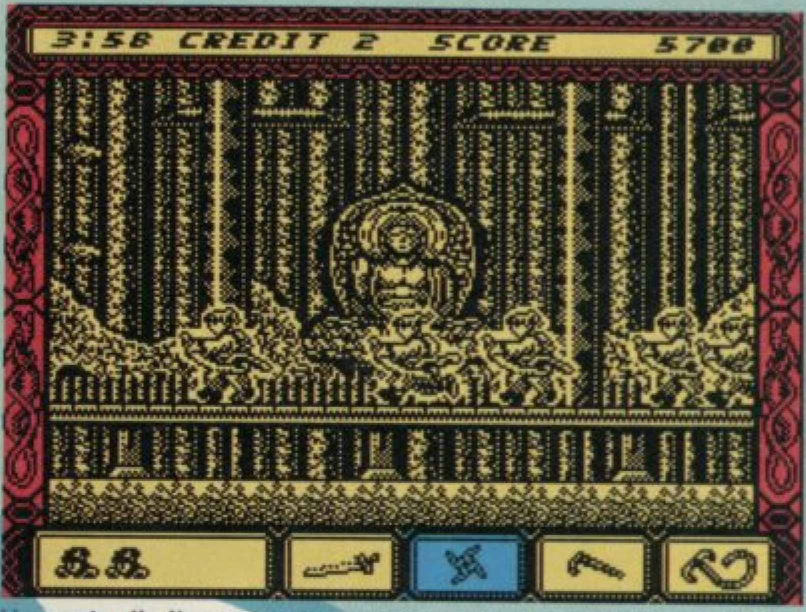
Matt Now, I'm not familiar with the coin-op at all here, so I could be a bit wrong about this, but here's what the game's all about (as I see it). You play a ninja-type character (to be more precise, the spirit of a white wolf reincarnated as a ninja character), on a mission to kill some evil warlord/rescue a princess/avenge your brother's death/something like that. But oh no! There are hundreds of other ninjas all over the place, each with but one thought in his mind – to stop you managing whatever it is you're out to do. Nothing all that unusual so far, but just such a simple premise has formed the basis for many an excellent coin-op conversion before. Let's have a closer look.

It seems like you're in for some pretty rough going, doesn't it (about seven levels of horizontally-scrolling rough going actually), and indeed you are! But don't despair – help is at hand! Help in the form of some spooky collectable items! Hurrah!

You see, a goodly number of the baddie ninjas drop a floating orb thing behind them as you bump them off. Collect them by simply running over them and you're provided with a 'ninja spirit' (hence the name of the game). This is a ghostly mirror-image replica of yourself, who runs along a few steps behind you, hacking when you do, jumping when you do and generally being not that well drawn, he comes equipped with a wide variety of fighting moves. To deal with head-on attacks there's a sort of forward slash move with the katana (which is what you call those curvy Japanese swords, or so I'm told). Then there's the sort of 'up in the air prod' move (for getting people that jump on you) and the 'kneeling and poking your knife into the ground' move (presumably for those occasions when people or thingies attack from beneath the floorboards, not that I've got to that bit yet).

Not too shabby a selection so far, but better than that (much better!) is our hero's jumping ability – it's mammoth! Here's a hero who could probably leap three quarters the length of the screen in a single mighty bound! Who can spring over the heads of the enemy like they're not even there! Who makes even Strider look a bit of slouch in the bouncing department!

And the bad guys are no stick-in-the-muds either! Whether swordsmen, giant ninjas, 'mystical kite-men' or, um, the other ones, pretty soon you have everyone on-screen bouncing around like mad things, slashing their swords through the air and screaming "Haaiii-agh!' at full volume (except they don't, but we do get an insistent oriental-type tune to make up for it in 128K). The whole effect is like one of those loopy Japanese TV shows you occasionally see at the end of the night down the Chinese takeaway, with oodles of people screaming, chopping away with swords and leaping about all over the place like a bunch of giant, human-shaped grasshoppers! Marvellous, ludicrous fun.



Um, actually I'm not quite sure what's meant to be going on here, but there's a nice picture of a buddah in the background (I think).

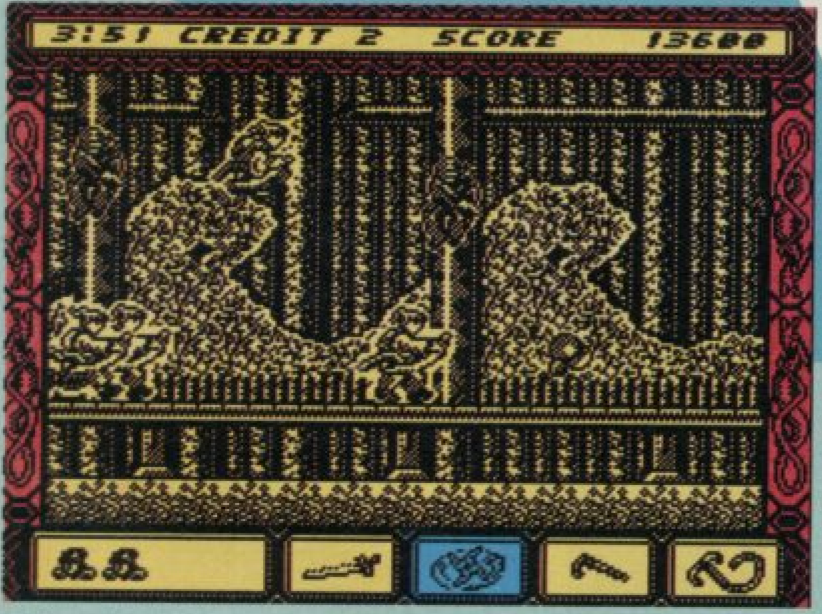
And that's exactly what *Ninja Spirit* is like, with one gigantic, massive, pointless glitch fouling up the whole business. Yup, have I got a 'but' to land on you now! (You knew there'd be a 'but', didn't you? I've been leading up to it all along.)

And the 'but' is... there is no possible way on this earth you can tell what's going on! The screen might as well be in another room for all the good it does you! It's ridiculous! Activision goes to all this expense (presumably quite a costly licence, getting programmers to come up with some pretty smart scrolling and then perfect what looks like it might be quite smooth and jolly gameplay) only to shoot itself quite severely in the foot by making a total hash of the graphics.

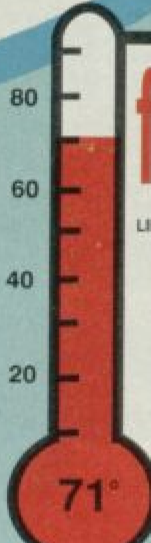
They're in monochrome, right? The little characters are fairly well drawn, well animated and of decent size (or at least, they look like they might be) but those backgrounds – aargh! Some graphic artist has just got totally carried away with himself, done some (admittedly rather nice) pictures of buddahs, rocks and Lord knows what else for the backgrounds, and somebody else, rather than bin them all and leave a plain black background or much use at all really (because you yourself have already killed off 99.9% of known baddies, by simple virtue of the fact that you're the one in front).

All seems well and good so far for an enjoyable arcade romp, wouldn't you agree? And indeed, things continue to look quite rosy as we take a closer look at the main character. Fairly large and something, has gone and left them in! It's a ridiculous joke – they've totally forgotten that people are meant to play the damn thing. Bullets, arrows, whole character sprites, simply disappear from view, then reappear again (after a fashion) seconds later! Ludicrous. (Ahem. Sorry. Getting a bit carried away.)

Right, where were we? *Ninja Spirit* – it could be a perfectly good game, but it's not, because in one fell swoop the graphics undo all the other good work put into it and render it near as dammit unplayable. Those with very sharp eyes and very clear monitors to play the thing on may have hours of fun, but for the rest of us it's a bit of a non-starter. How very unnecessary.



This one's pretty incomprehensible too, but for the sake of argument let's say that that's you jumping in the top middle of the screen. Your 'ninja spirit', then, will be the shadow figure just below you. As for the rest of it, um, well, I'm sort of lost. (Sorry.)



finalverdict

LIFE EXPECTANCY	GRAPHICS	ADDICTIVENESS
70°	62°	69°

DIAGNOSIS
What could have been a neat arcade slash-'em-up is practically ruined by confused graphics. Silly.

INSTANT APPEAL 75°

YS ADVE



And lo there was a great rejoicing throughout the land, and yea verily did Speccy owners everywhere throw up their hands, not to mention their fish suppers, and acclaim the name of **Mark Evans** of Great Yarmouth. Good Evans, they said, when they heard the news that Mark is the first person in the world (so far as I know) to solve the stunningly difficult Abstract Concepts game, *Mindfighter*. Three cheers for Mark... cheer-cheer-cheer.

Mark says he doesn't have much luck when writing in to magazines, but he's sending his mammoth five-page solution to me for three reasons – "1) *Your Sinclair* has the best adventure section out of all the big mags; 2) You wrote a decent review for *Mindfighter* while all the others criticised it; 3) I'm attempting to bribe you to do more special offers." Okay, the bribe's worked, Mark, although the fiver must have been nicked somewhere along the way.

Some tips on *Mindfighter*, like what to do when you see the bright light? TI SDRAWOT HTUOS DAEH. The canvas bag? TI ERONGI. The cobwebs? MEHT KAERB. The dog found at the rubble path? SEXOF OT EVIG. Harry? MIH ERONGI. To enter a trance? ELAHXE-HTAERB DLOH-ELAHNI (and repeat to leave the trance). Important command while in trance – SEYE HGUORHT STNEVE YARTROP. Thanks to Mark for those tips, and the full solution – if anyone wants further help, write and ask.

Graeme Michie of Jedburgh, which is where the Jeds come from, offers some tipettes on the cover-tape game *Heroes Of Karn*. To get rid of the lizard – XOBREDNIT HTIW SEHSRAM NI SAG THGIL. What to do to the frog? Oh come on, surely everyone can get that... no? Oh well – TI SSIK. How to kill the Barrowight? ELBIB EHT HTIW. How to get out of the cell when captured? YENOM HTIW DRAUG EBIRB. To catch the bird you naturally need the cage, and must then say DRIB TEG, NEREB. To kill the serpent, the command you need is DRIB HTIW TNEPRES LLIK, NEREB.

Alan Skidmore hails from Worthing, but I can't hear him so now he writes to me instead. He's playing Linda Wright's *Cloud 99* from Zenobi and wonders how to get the hen to lay an egg, and how to get past Jack Frost on the bridge. To get the hens to lay the eggs you need a happy cock. At first the cock can only go "Cock-a-doo", so what's missing? Why, a doodle, of course. And the source of a doodle's a doddle if you think punny. As for Mr Frost – NAC YARPS. He might turn up again later but shouldn't then steal anything vital.

Paul Luby writes from Keighley in West Yorks and says that he tried typing ZENOBI into *Bulbo And The Lizard-King*, which was of course yet another wondrous cover-tape adventure that our noble and handsome editor brought us (what, me, a crawler?). The result of this rash act? Two pages of hints! But Paul's a bit miffed with our Tip Card on *Wolfman*. He says that when he gets to the bit where he fills the flask, if he follows the Tip Card's advice then he ends up turning into a werewolf. Help! Well, what do you expect when these Tip Cards are handed over to amateurs? Bound to lead to trouble. What you do when you get the flask (and this is forwards, folks) is EXAMINE GRAVE-N-E-E-W-S-S-S-S-FILL FLASK-N-E-WATER WEED. Okay?

Mollie Brewster of Paisley is having trouble with her runes. The ones in *Runes Of Zendos*, that is. She can't translate them and even research in the local library hasn't turned up anything remotely similar. The clue you need is that each rune spells out the month it relates to.

Vicki Green has got no imagination. Or rather, she's got no *Imagination*, that amusing little adventure published a few years ago by Firebird, methinks. Anyone who's got a copy gathering dust on the shelves might like to pass it on at a reasonable price to a deserving home where it will be played 'til it's finished. The address is 26 Northmoor Way, Northmoor Park, Wareham, Dorset BH20 4SJ. Vicki also asks about a mouldy oldie, which is *Genesis II*. How do you open the safe in the library? My files are blankety-blank on that one, so kind souls to the rescue. Vicki would like to write to any keen adventurers out there, but I should warn you that she's got a screw loose somewhere. How do I know? 'Cos she wants to become a journalist, that's why. Give it up now,

Yet another fanzine comes along to try to part you from your hard-earned pennies. This one I've mentioned before, but this time it's actually appeared, and I know because I've got one in front of me (a magazine, fools!). The people behind *ZAT* had the enterprising idea of producing an Issue 0 sample copy, which has a very strong adventure content, and editor David Ledbury says that's purely his personal bias. Well that's what it's like when you're an editor, David – you can do anything in the world, and you also get to keep the brackets.

***ZAT* did start up and fade down again very quickly before, and David says he'll be writing to everyone who didn't get the second issue with a free copy of the new mag and a letter of apology. This time round it'll be concentrating on just two micros, the Spectrum and the SAM Coupé, and to get a sample copy send 60p plus a first-class stamp to *ZAT*, PO Box 488, Tweedale, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire.**

How can you tell whether a home-grown Spectrum adventure is any good or not? Well, if it's any good you can bet Zenobi Software will sign it up and release it sooner or later! That's just happened to the excellent game originally penned by Patrick Walsh of Mental Images – *The Case Of The Beheaded Smuggler*. I gave this some well-deserved praise a few issues ago, when Patrick sent it in for review – a terrific Sherlock Holmes adventure, full of atmosphere. Contact Zenobi for price details and availablity, at 26 Spotland Tops, Cutgate, Rochdale, Lancs OL12 7NX.

NTURES

by MIKE GERRARD





Vicki, while your brain, liver and bank balance are still healthy.

I'm anxious to answer this letter from **John Fearon** of Bury, if only because it's got a nasty-looking pin in the top corner holding it together. A bit like Whistlin' Rick Wilson, really. But I'd have answered John's letter even if he hadn't said "how much better your adventure pages are than those of, ahem, a certain other Speccy mag I could mention." Not that I didn't know already but it's nice to be reminded.

John's letter asks if my reviews couldn't make a mention of whether tape games are compatible with the +3, as he's had trouble loading *Red Door*, *Bulbo And The Lizard-King* and *The Case Of The Beheaded Smuggler*. I can't really do that, John, as it's not necessarily the tapes that are at fault so much as all +3s being different when it comes to loading success. In the same week I had letters from two readers asking if I could mention +2 compatibility too. The silly thing was that the games they were complaining about all loaded perfectly on my own +3.

> If I mention Zenobi a lot I assure you it's not 'cos I get bribed to do it – chance would be a fine thing, I've never been offered a bribe in my life! Nope, it's just because it's the most active software house around on the Spectrum adventure scene. Its latest release is both parts of Les Floyd's game *The Pawns Of War*. The first part, which was actually called *The Pawns Of War*, got about 6/10 from me a year or so ago, and the second part, *The Infiltrator*, was about the same standard. Zenobi must have liked them though, as here they both are on the one tape for £2.99 – and you must know the Zenobi address by now!

I often have trouble loading stuff into my +3, and usually fall back (ow!) on the reliable rubber-keyboard 48K. But things I have trouble with load okay into other machines, while other people's problem tapes load into mine. So there's no such thing as universal compatibility. Any reliable company like Zenobi or Tartan Software will send you another tape if you have loading problems, and keep sending you new recordings 'til you get one that works. The 128K Spectrums are notoriously bad, and I remember Tom Frost of Tartan Software telling me that the only time he's ever had to give a customer a refund because of loading problems was for a 128K. And all of the many tapes that Tom sent to this customer loaded perfectly on the 128K Speccy that he tried them on before posting them out. Blame the machines, not the long-suffering software houses.

Finally, apologies to any readers who bought my wondrous book, *Adventures On The Spectrum* (a few copies still available, so hurry-hurry-hurry), and then found themselves having to pay a few pence excess postage to the friendly postie. It wasn't me, trying to save a few quid. Blame my local post office – one of their scales went on the blink and no-one found out 'til I'd sent out a pile of books with insufficient postage. Sorry if one was yours – not my fault, honest!

> You've all heard of Sam, of course. No, not Sam Malone, or even Sam Spade, but SAM Coupé. What you certainly haven't heard of, at least not from me, is *Turbo*, a new magazine utterly devoted and also dedicated to the SAM. There is an adventure section, which is why I'm telling you about it. It has other things, like programs, reviews, interviews, letters and so on, and you can get it from that young yuppie entrepreneur Adrian Betts at 8 Healey, Lakeside, Tamworth, Staffs B77 2RF. Healey what? Nothing, just Healey. Cost is £5 for five issues, or £10 for 11 issues, cheques etc payable to 'A Betts'.

COVERGAME COMFORT

You may have occasionally noticed a rectangular black thingie stuck on the front of your copy of the best magazine in the western hemisphere – only bettered by *What's Big In Bangkok*, but that's in the eastern hemisphere so it doesn't count. This is a cover-tape, and several of them have recently contained adventures. Hurrah! And bad news for the reader who told me he didn't buy last December's issue 'cos he doesn't like cover-tapes – that's the one that had no less than three adventures on some copies of the mag! Anyhow and anyway, letters are now coming in asking oodles of questions on these games, so time for me to come to your aid. A solution to *Red Door* has already been printed, and there are some clues to *Heroes Of Karn* elsewhere in this month's column, as well as a freebie available if you send me an sae, but for your further adventuring comfort I present these hints and tips on some of the other covergames that have got you scratching your heads. At least I hope they're the reason you're scratching your heads.

BULBO AND THE LIZARD-KING

Use HIRE, SELECT or CHOOSE to recruit a member, and FIRE to dismiss. To get the donkey to go with you TAKE HOLD OF ROPE. To pass the dragon, either kill it or cure it. To cure the dragon, examine it when the donkey is with you and then search the pack to find the necessary items. Don't assume you have to hire all of your party immediately. Hire the Elf first, and you can get through a fair part of the game before having to go back and hire a second character. To pass the rat, go to the location NW of the dragon and ROLL BOULDER (but you must visit the rat first for this to take effect). Ignore the small lizard.

To get past the Orcs, simply HIDE in the bushes. You can't kill the bear yourself, but a swordsman or archer can. There are two ways of getting the donkey over the wall. The kind way is to LIFT DONKEY OVER WALL. The not-so-kind way is to THROW DONKEY OVER WALL! To get up the slippery slope, climb carefully. You can't cross the ravines and chasms if the donkey is with you, so DROP ROPE to leave it behind. You should talk to both the Hermit and the Witch before and after their companions arrive. With the Witch, examine the coins in your pouch to learn the name of the 'golden bird'. To pass the Guardian you need some magic from the network of caves where the Hermit lives. Examine them all 'til you find the one with the shelves full of goodies, then just WAIT provided the Elf is with you. To cross the river, you could get a large friend to build a boat... or you could just SWIM RIVER then SWIM EAST. As for the lake, you can SWIM LAKE then SWIM SOUTH, or else just WAIT (provided you've done a good deed beforehand). You do need the spade, to dig in the sand, so STEAL it when you have somewhere to hide it from the Trolls. The backpack? That'll do nicely! The spider can be killed by the archer, and the swordsman can cut the web, or get the dwarf to have words with the spider. Then again, you can also WAIT provided the donkey is with you. For some clues to defeating Stratos, have a conversation with all the creatures that will answer you. For the guard at the castle, EXAMINE ALCOVE to discover him, then get the archer to kill him, and get the thief to unlock the main doors. For the pit, ask the giant to help, or alternatively all together can push some of the marble columns to form a bridge. For Stratos, use all the information you should have been told by the time that you encounter him, and remember that the 'circle' requires four companions — and that does NOT include a donkey! The crystal dagger only has one use. Lay it in the depression in the marble slab and remember what the mice told you. If you've forgotten, RUB IT! To find the depression just examine the slab.



FOREST AT WORLD'S END

Getting started Go south to get the bow and arrows, then find the farm, go in and take the food and retrace your steps to the forest.

The Creatures

Elves Kill with the bow.
Flying Lizards Also killed with the bow.
Swamp Creature ALSO killed with bow (this is bow-ring!).
Wolves Call for help and take the ring.
Nymph Kiss her to get the ring.
Dragon Blow horn and he helps you.
Giant Spider Well, how about trying the bow?
Witch You need to wear the ring to be safe.
Demons Kill with the sword.
Korl Warrior Use the sword again.
Wizard Zarn Kill him with the... erm, the sword again.

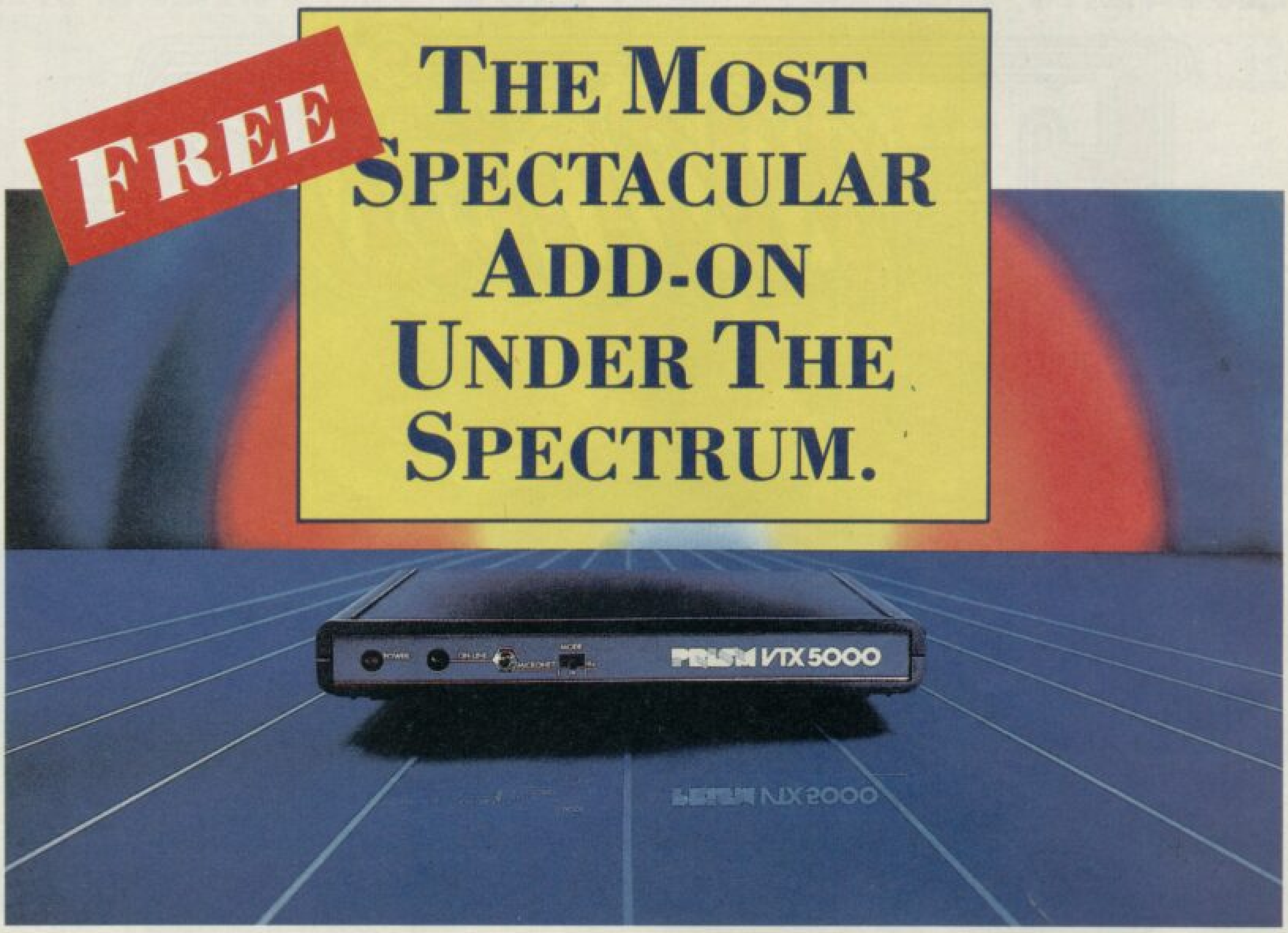
The Objects

Food Eat it, what else?
Horn Summons dragon.
Log Lay it across the chasm.
Coin Give to Blacksmith as a tip.
Rope Tie to rock at top of volcano.
Rock At Volcano Tie rope to it.
Glowing Rock Rub it.
Chest Holds the Secret Crystals of Vulcan.
Key Opens chest.
Crystals Give to blacksmith for sword.
Sword Magical, a useful weapon, get from blacksmith.
Bow And Arrows Found near start, kill almost everything.

WARLORD

(Solution by **Jim Magee**)

Acorns Give to raven
Amulet Get from druid
Bear Kill with sword and shield.
Boar Just warns you of wolves approaching.
Body Get the cloak.
Bridge WEAR HELMET to be allowed across.
Burial Pit Go DOWN into it for chariot, food and iron.
Chariot Forget it.
Clay Pot Ignore it.
Cloak Wear it to pass fire to and from crystal cave.
Crystal Ring STEP IN RING to be transported. Return to crystal cave for end of game.
Danu Gives you Torc to help you in your quest.
Demons In vale, WEAR AMULET to pass them.
Druid Has amulet. Give Roman to get it off him.
Enchanted Forest Must have staff to get through.
Farm Forget it.
Figure Follows you at times – ignore it.
Fire In Rock Cave WEAR CLOAK to get through it.
Fire In Fomorian's Cave THROW URN IN FIRE.
Fissure ENTER FISSURE.
Fomorians Use sword to kill one of them, THROW URN IN FIRE to kill them all.
Food Eat it, though it's not essential.
Forest See 'Enchanted Forest'. Other forests are no problem.
Groove PLACE SWORD IN GROOVE, GET SWORD. The sword is now blue and can kill a Fomorian.
Guard at Hillfort GIVE SALT TO GUARD to enter.
Hare FREE HARE and it turns into a God.
Helmet Wear it to cross bridge.
Iron In the pit. It's money, so BUY MEAT WITH IRON.
Ladder GET LADDER, LEAN LADDER AGAINST PLATFORM, UP.
Lake You feel tired here so SLEEP and you're given a sword.
Lug A helpful God. The helmet is his.
Meat Buy from trader with iron.
Minerva Enemy Goddess. Don't follow her through swamp.
Monolith Examine it to find fissure.
Nemed The tribe whose ashes are in the urn – EXAMINE URN.
Ox KILL OX (with sword) to get rope.
Pig Can be killed, but doesn't matter.
Pool JUMP INTO POOL/CLIMB OUT OF POOL.
Pot Clay pot – ignore it.
Rats Ignore them.
Raven GIVE ACORNS TO RAVEN and it becomes Danu.
Ring See 'Crystal Ring'.
Roman When he attacks you, go to Druid and the Roman follows you. GIVE ROMAN TO DRUID. The druid will then leave the amulet for you. You need to be carrying the rope, otherwise Roman will keep attacking you, in which case just attack him back and he runs away. This may be the figure that then sometimes follows you.
Rope Get it from ox, and keep it for Roman.
Sacrifice Druid's business – forget it.
Salt Give it to guard, but don't take into pool.
Shield Needed for killing bear.
Silver Ignore.
Slave Ignore.
Skull Ignore.
Slab Examine it to find groove.
Staff Helps you through enchanted forest.
Straw JUMP ON STRAW to get down from platform.
Swamp Don't follow Minerva too far through swamp.
Route E/E/N/E from clearing to forest path, reverse to return.
Torc Wear it. It gets warm if you are in danger at start of swamp.
Trader Buy meat from him with iron.
Urn Wear helmet to get it, and throw it in fire in Fomorian's cave.
Vase Ignore it.
Wax plug In urn. When melted by heat the Nemedians escape.
Wolves THROW MEAT TO WOLVES to get rid of them.
Woman In hut – see 'Minerva'.

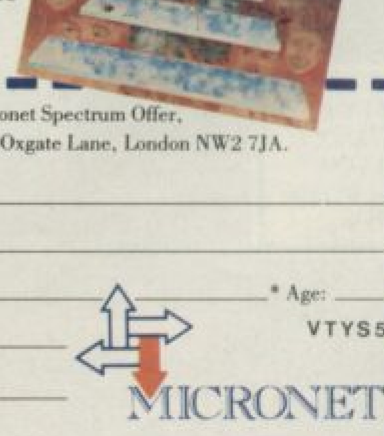


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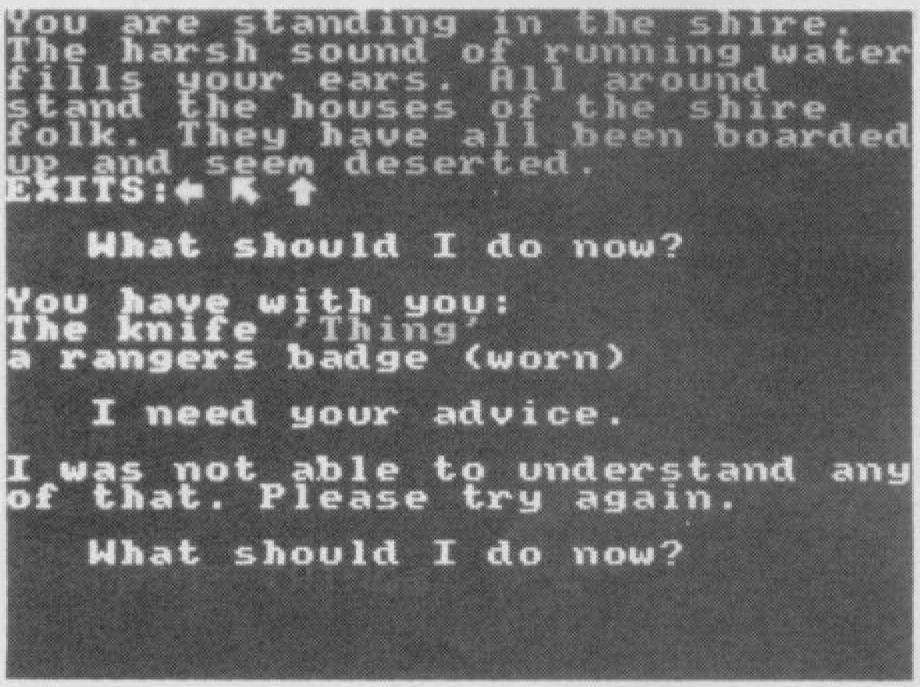
The Hobble Hunter

You can never tell with an adventure. Some look deadly boring and blossom into great games, others start out promising and fizzle out completely. Unfortunately, folks, *The Hobble Hunter* is of the latter category, which is disappointing for a Compass release. When I saw the professional packaging I was prepared to overlook the fact that this has to be the 97th Hobbit send-up to be published since the original. There's a full-colour inlay, a very nice little map of the Middle Lands of Gordor, plus two printed sheets of instructions and general help and comments. There's even a poem, and the interesting information that in the Gordor time-scale there are 25 seconds to the Wobble and 90 Wobbles per day. The game's in real-time, so night falls every... well, every night really, and you have about ten days (or 900 Wobbles) in which to complete your task. Which is? Surprise-surprise, rescue the Ring of Gilthron from the evil Mildu.

The screen looks good and the text is colourful... in fact a bit too colourful for me in places. I don't mind a bit of rudery in a game, such as you get in *Behind Closed Doors*, but those games are also witty, whereas simply mentioning pony turds and big jobs isn't particularly clever or amusing. I do like the prompt you get at the side of the screen though, a typical Compass extra. The "What Now?" message has a Hobble's face just before it, with two hands directly below. As you type your input the hands separate to hold it, like an angler measuring out his catch. Nice touch.

A pity the nice touches haven't been extended to the game's logic though. I knew I somehow had to get out of Big Belly's tavern near the start, but I couldn't find any money for the landlord, who refused to let me back out again without paying for the beer I needed to buy – pretty true to life so far! In the end I had to shamefully resort to the cheat-sheet to discover that if your very first command isn't correct then you'll never get the gold coin you need at this point. There's also a bit in which you get bogged down in a swamp, across which you have to travel. After messing about with planks, I eventually got through by the ludicrous method of riding a pony. Now if Sam the fat Hobble sinks in the mud and gets stuck, what chance does a pony with fat Sam on its back have? One little fault doesn't spoil a game, but several do.

The vocabulary is nowhere near wide enough, especially when you're trying to talk to the other characters. It's the same old story – if you're not word-perfect they ignore you every time. You also die constantly, either through not eating or falling down holes and so on. The graphics are only average too, and some of the ones that draw slowly are repeated in different locations. It all gets to be rather annoying!



The Hobble Hunter is far from being the worst game you'll ever play in your life, but it's hardly what we've come to expect from Compass after past glories like *Demon From The Darkside* and the more recent *Intruder Alert*. I dc warn people about writing yet more Hobbit send-ups, but do they listen? Do they flippin' 'eck.

Title .... *The Hobble Hunter*
Price £1.99
Publisher......... Compass Software,111 Mill Road, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31 0BB

Graphics	■■■■■□□□□□
Text	■■■■■□□□□□
Value for Money	■■■■■■□□□□
Personal Rating	■■■■■□□□□□

5

COUPON CORNER

Be alert and buy *Alert* — or buy two, and have a pair of lerts. The Compass Software game I gave a whizzo 8/10 score to in the February issue, *Intruder Alert*, is now available exclusively to lerting *YS* readers at a whacking-ish £1.49 including postage and packing. Just clip out the coupon and point it at the Compass address.

To: Compass Software, 111 Mill Road, Cobholm, Gt Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31 0BB.

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

Post code ....

Okay, if Mike Gerrard likes your game then it's good enough for me so send me a copy of *Intruder Alert* right now, and I enclose my £1.49 to swell the Compass coffer.

Well worth repeating is the offer on that exclusive *Your Sinclair* compilation tape, *The Best Of The Indies*, compiled by my good self and Zenobi Software. For £3.99 you get a collection of my own fave 'indie' adventures, namely *Domes Of Sha*, *Labours Of Hercules*, *Double Agent*, *Cloud 99*, *The Secret Of Little Hodcome* and *Retarded Creatures And Caverns*. And the last of those was a splendiferous *YS* Megagame, folks! Oh yes, and *Double Agent* is in two full-length parts. What more do you want, blood?

To: Zenobi Software, 26 Spotland Tops, Cutgate, Rochdale, Lancs OL12 7NX.

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

Post Code ....

Please send me *Mike Gerrard's Best Of The Indies* at the 'umble price of £3.99, as available ONLY in *Your Sinclair*.

DEAD END

I remembered that old motto, 'Adventure players do it without the instructions', so I plunged in head-first. A Speccyfication of a Commodore (ptui!) original, text-only and *GAC*'d, the game began at 5.06pm on the afternoon of Wednesday September 15th 1941. I was in my office – "A window behind my desk blinked a neon message for a moment then dulled, the office pausing in darkness only to reappear like a rabbit pulled out of a magicians (sic) top hat as the neon blinked again." Blinkin' 'eck.

I was carrying a watch, a gun and a photograph. I examined the watch. It was 5.08pm already. Better get a move on. But where, and for why? Damn it, where did I put those instructions? I examined the gun. A .38 automatic, six bullets. The photo? Three people standing before a large log fire – a distinguished man in his early '30s (sounded like me), a very attractive brunette (sounded like my kind of dame) and Alverson (sounded like no-one I'd ever met before in my life – where were those instructions??). The back of the photo provided an address, 237 Bluehills, so I decided to go take a visit. But hang on, which way? That rabbit about the rabbit in the hat had been all very well, but where was the damn door? N, S, E, and W all produced the same interesting response – "I wouldn't do that". No? So what *would* you do? OPEN THE WINDOW? Nope. OPEN THE DOOR, LEAVE THE OFFICE? Not understood. NORTH, NORTH-EAST (and all the rest)? No. JUMP THROUGH THE WINDOW? No, not understood either. This was getting serious.

And then I found the instructions. A glossy, very handsomely produced booklet which, God be my witness, fell open at the very page which said "Interactive Technology stories incorporate an advanced interpreter (parser) that can understand not just two word commands but also complex sentence structures." Oh yeah? So how come I got one that understood sweet FA?

Then, inspiration... O-U-T spells... OUT. I stepped straight from my office and into my car, burning rubber to 237 Bluehills. A butler opened the door, asked me my name. Well hell, who *was* I? Oh yeah, Philip Marlowe, of course, so I typed in MARLOWE and he slammed the door in my face, muttering something about reporters. So I tried PHILIP MARLOWE instead. That got me in. It was that goddamned advanced interpreter again – just too advanced.

Inside I met Marcia. She said "I suppose your (sic) here to ask questions?" So I asked her some questions. But that was a drag because Marcia's answers always prompted me for the next question 'til she let on about some folders on her husband's desk. So I went to the study. EXAMINE THE DESK. Sure enough there they were, lying on the top. GET FOLDERS. "I couldn't see that," came the reply. Mmm. Things were shaping up for another grey day in Tinseltown.

```
1941

Office

A window behind my desk blinked
a neon message for a moment
then dulled, the office pausing
in darkness only to reappear
like a rabbit pulled out of a
magicians top hat as the neon
blinked again.
>run for it
( I don't understand that. )
>examine desk
( That is not important. )

Rain battered at the windows
noisily.
>similes, adverbs, what more
could you want?
( I don't understand that. )
( I don't understand that. )
( I don't understand that. )
>■
```

Dead End is based on the film of *Farewell My Lovely*, from the Raymond Chandler novel, and I wonder whether the author's obtained permission to do it. He certainly hasn't done it very well – typical *GAC* faults of missing full stops and closing quotes sitting on their own at the start of the following line. For £7.95 you could probably get the complete works of Chandler in paperback, and I recommend you do that instead.

Title .... *Dead End*
Price £7.95
Publisher.... Interactive Technology, PO Box 146, Sheffield S13 7TY

Graphics	
Text	
Value for Money	
Personal Rating	4

KIND SOULS

Golly gosh – Kind Souls in two consecutive issues? Can it be that the perfumed air of springtime has intoxicated my usually sound self into such an gushing display of enthusiasm, generosity and affection? Absolutely. Now that the Big Squeeze is over (we're back to five pages, folks) I thought I'd make special room for Solver Supreme **Anthony Melville** of 39 Slaidburn Drive, Hala, Lancaster, Lancs LA1 4QX. Not only is his list rather large but he's put it into alphabetical order, marked which versions of games he's solved and where different ones exist. Is your room always neat and tidy too, Anthony?

Anthony's help-list is – *Adventure Quest, Arrow Of Death I/II, Black Knight, The Bounty Hunter, Case Of The Mixed-Up Shymer, Castle Adventure, Castle Blackstar, The Challenge, Colossal Adventure, Cricket Crazy I, The Cup, Dark Storm, Davy Jones's Locker, Desert Island, The Devil's Hand, Devil's Island, Domes Of Sha, Double Agent, Dungeon Adventure, Emerald Isle, The Enchanted Cottage, Energem Enigma, Erik The Viking, Escape Fom Magic, Escape From Pulsar 7, Espionage Island, Excalibur, Feasibility Experiment, Final Mission, Funhouse* (Pacific Software version), *The Golden Idol, Grange Hill, The Hobble Hunter, House Of Horrors, Inca Curse, The Inner Lakes, Intruder Alert* (first version), *Invincible Island, Jack And The Beanstalk, Labours Of Hercules, Legend Of Craldon's Creek, The Lost Ruby, Mafia Contract I/II, Mansion Quest, Marie Celeste, Matchmaker, The Menagerie, Message From Andromeda, Mission X, Murder At The Manor, Mountains Of Ket, Mutant* (first version), *Mystery Of The Indus Valley, Nosferatu: Quest For The Vampyre* (Omni Software game), *Once Upon A Lily Pad, The O-Zone, The Pawns Of War, Perseus And Andromeda, Price Of Magik, Prince Of Tyndal, Prospector, Pyramid, Questprobe I/II/III, Realm Of Darkness, The Red Lion, Return To Eden, Return To Ithaca, Robin Of Sherwood, Runestone Of Zaobab, Seas Of Blood, Shipwreck, Snowball, Soap Land, Star Wreck, Temple Of Vran, Temple Terror, Ten Little Indians, The Time Machine, Waxworks, Witch's Cauldron, Witch Hunt, Wizard Of Akyrz, Wiz-Biz, Worm In Paradise, Yellow Door.*

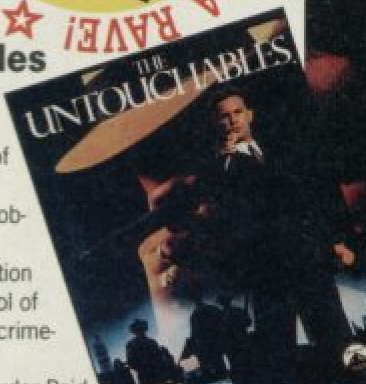
Jackie Holt has appeared on oodles of occasions, and here she is again. Write to her at 13 Montague Street, Bulwell, Nottingham NG6 8EU if you need assistance on *Atlantis, Brian The Bold, The Bimbles, Basque Terrorists, Curse Of The Seven Faces, Countdown, Colditz, Crystal Of Chantie, The Extricator, Four Minutes To Midnight, Greedy Gulch, Inspector Flukeit, In Search Of Angels, Jason And The Golden Fleece, Jade Stone, Vera Cruz Affair, Labours Of Hercules, Mindstone, Moron, Murder Off Miami, Murder Hunt, Pride Of The Federation, Prehistoric Adventure, Pharoah's Tomb, Rigel's Revenge, Ronnie Goes To Hollywood, Serf's Tale, To The Manor Bourne, Twice Shy, Valley Of The Kings, Wiz Biz* and *Zzzz.*


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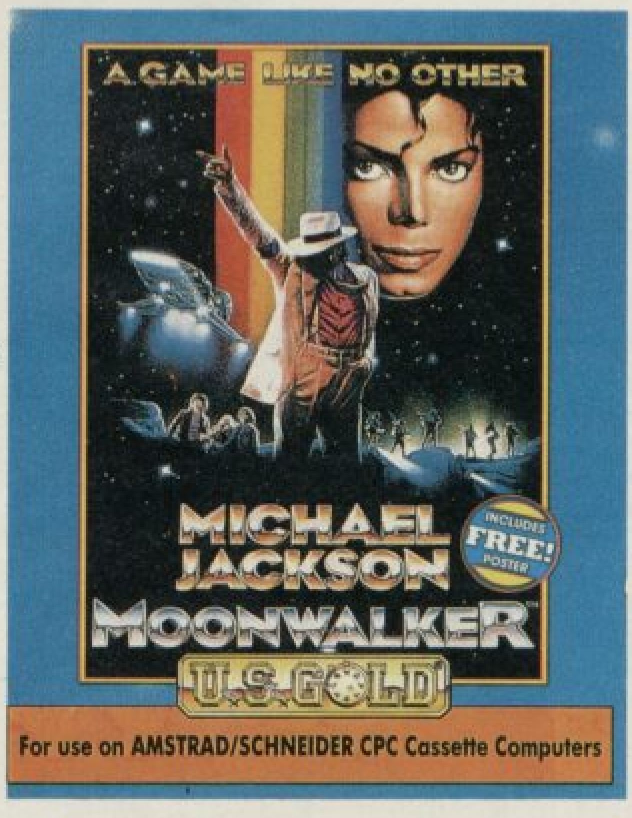
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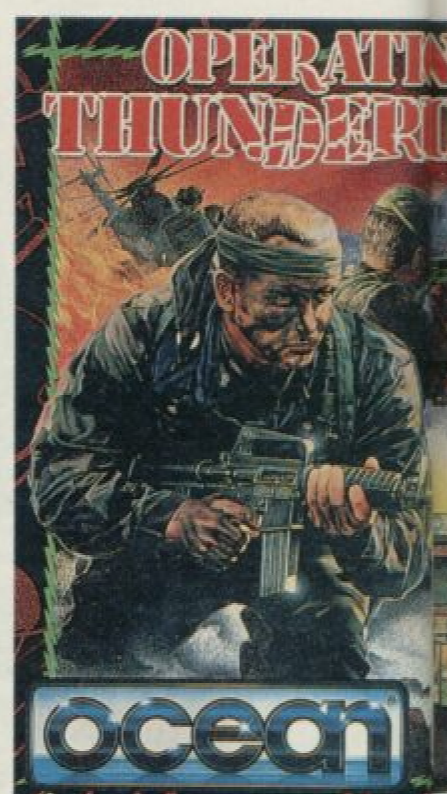
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WIN!!

A THROBBING SONY MEGABASS STEREO WITH CD!! PLUS! A WHOLE LOAD OF MOBILE THINGS!



Castle Master, eh?

You know all about this, of course. It's a really brill new game from Incentive/Domark, featuring a new souped-up version of Freescape, a great big castle and, erm, lots of things lurking in corners! There are keys, potions, spectres, secret passageways and even cryptic puzzles devised by Mel Croucher ('Europe's funniest man'). There's a choice of prince or princess to rescue too! So what doesn't it have? Well, erm, it doesn't have any dragons (they're a bit difficult to do in Freescape, what with those big, flappy wings and everything). Still, that slight lapse aside, it's really very good – a Megagame, no less! (For all the proof you need, turn to page 74!)

So what can I win? (A prize and a half, that's what!)

Incentive/Domark thought long and hard (blimey!) about this one. It'd be a bit tricky to give away a whole castle (the postage would be horrendous, for a start). And partial-castles aren't much use (they let the rain in like anything). So what did they come up with? Well, what could be more castley than a fab Sony CFD DW83 portable stereo, with a CD player, twin tape decks, a radio, a digital clock/timer and wonderful, throbbing megabass? Just think, you could play *Greensleeves* on it!

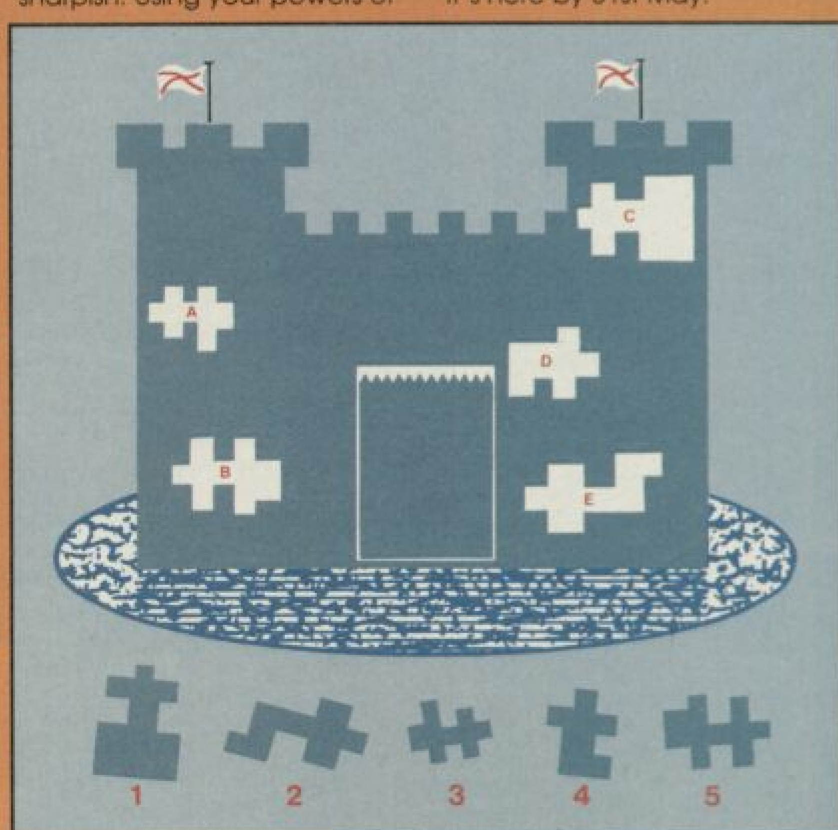
Runners-up get the VIP treatment too, as there are millions of (well, 20, to be precise) fab *Castle Master* mobiles (shaped like a bat) lined up for them. These'd look great hanging from the rear-view mirror of your white charger (or yellow Escort MKII if you're not the horsey sort)!

The fiddly bit

Yes, it's time to tell you what you have to do. You see, some rotters have got it in for people who live in big castles. People like us in *YS* in fact! Yep, they've just 'had a go' at the brand new *YS* Castle (Castle Monmouth) with one of those big wind-up spoon things *(He means a catapult. Ed)* and left whopping great holes everywhere! Oh well, the damage doesn't look too bad (just a few massive lumps of rock knocked out of the walls). And look! Our attackers have left the five missing pieces lying on the ground underneath. Hurrah!

What you've got to do then is repair the damage pretty sharpish. Using your powers of observation, try and work out which piece goes where. If, for example, you think chunk number one goes in hole A, write A next to the 'one' on the coupon. (You'd be a bit thick, though.)

Once you've done that, bung your name and address on the coupon, chop it out, sick it on the back of a postcard and send it off to *Portakabins Come And Go, But A Castle Is Forever And It Looks Much Nicer Anyway (Especially With The Frilly Bits Round The Top)* Compo, *Your Sinclair*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2AP. And make sure it's here by 31st May.



Here are where the bits go, so now I've just got to get some peasants to put them back in...

1) .... 2) .... 3) .... 4) .... 5) ....

Name ....

Address ....

.... Post code ....

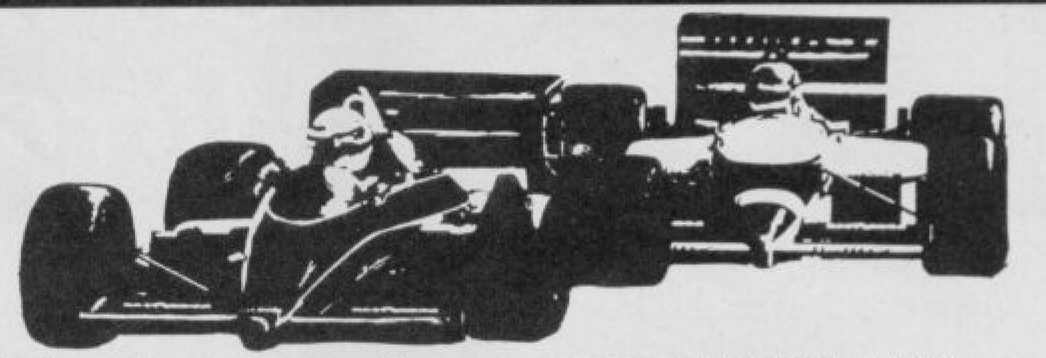
RULES

- The massed armies of Future Publishing and Incentive/Domark had better steer clear of this one. As far as mercy goes, we're back in the dark ages!
- The drawbridge goes up on May 31st, so don't try besieging us with entries after that. If you do, you'll have to face the Iron Maiden (and we don't mean the crappy heavy metal group).
- Matt's not a compassionate sort of chap. Any complaints and you'll go straight into his slimey dungeon.

PROGRAM PITSTOP



Pitstop paves the way yet again! Direct from the smelliest bed in Kent, *Jonathan Davies* presents, among others, the program all you SAM owners out there have been waiting for – it makes your Speccy games compatible! Hooray!!



You'll have to excuse me if my typing's a bit scruffy this month – I'm writing this in bed. It's a bit tricky with all the wires and things, and the darkness makes seeing what I'm doing a little harder than usual, but there's nothing like the warmth and security of one's own duvet to contrast with the hardship of academic life. Anyway, I'd better get a move on as it's nearly lunchtime.

First up this month we've got a real cracker – not only Pitstop's very first SAM program, by **Richard Bagnall,** but also a pretty nifty procedure to get your 'incompatible' games working on the new machine, courtesy **Richard Webb**. Then there's the first part of **Malcolm Goodman**'s triff loading routine. It's a miracle!

SAM STUFF

Da-daaa! Here it is – the first ever SAM Coupé program to appear in Pitstop. An historic occasion indeed. The only slight snag is that I haven't a clue what it does. Being an impoverished student means that ownership of an actual SAM is something realised only in my dreams. Thus I haven't actually been able to try the program out.

It looks good, though, as it should do coming from **Richard Bagnall**. It appears to put on some kind of a graphical display, so type it in and do whatever you have to do on a SAM to get it running. Once you've done that, wait for the counter on the screen to reach zero before you come to any conclusions.

```
10 REM SKY WORMS SAM COUPE ONLY
20 REM ORIGINAL IDEA BY D.P. AL
LEN

30 RECORD TO A$
40 DIM R(3) : LET R(1)=10,R(2)=
22,R(3)=30
50 DIM D(3) : LET D(1)=-1,D(2)=
1,D(3)=-1,B=4,YOS=-18
60 DO
70 FOR F=0 TO 4 STEP .02 : LET
A=6.3*F/4
80 LET X=96+64*COS A+27*(COS A*
COS(A*B)-SIN A*SIN (A*B))
90 LET Y=96+64*SIN A+27*(SIN A*
COS(A*B)+COS A*SIN (A*B))
100 PEN 7 : PLOT RND(255),191
110 PEN B-3 : CIRCLE 255-X*.6,Y,
R(1)
120 PEN B : CIRCLE X,Y,R(2)
130 PEN B-1 : CIRCLE 255-X*1.35,
Y,R(3)
140 SCROLL 4,16
150 PRINT #1; AT 1,0; INT((7-B)*
400-(F*100))
160 FOR G=1 TO 3
170 IF R(G)=6 OR R(G)=35 THEN LE
T D(G)=-D(G)
180 LET R(G)=R(G)+D(G):NEXT G:NE
XT F
190 LET B=B+1 : LOOP UNTIL B>6 :
RECORD STOP
200 CLS : FOR F=1 TO LEN A$ STEP
23
210 BLITZ A$(F TO F+22) : SCROLL
4,16
220 NEXT F : GOTO 200
```

And if you thought that was impressive then just take a gander at this. Behold – the procedure to get all those non-compatible Speccy games up and running on your SAM. Incredible but true. Apparently **Richard Webb** wasn't too happy about only being able to run half his collection on the new machine, so, being an enterprising sort of chap, he set about solving the problem. And here's his solution.

All that's needed, he says, is a standard Speccy and a couple of blank tapes...

1) Turn on the Spectrum and save its ROM to tape by typing SAVE "SPECCYROM" CODE O,16384.
2) Load the Emulator program into the SAM and press the ESC key when prompted to "Play Spectrum tape now".
3) Load the Spectrum ROM into the SAM by typing LOAD "SPECCYROM" CODE 65536.
4) Add the following lines to the Basic Loader program –
55 LOAD "SPECCYROM" CODE 65536
135 SAVE "SPECCYROM" CODE 65536,16384
(To speed up loading, add DEVICE T35: to the start of line 100.)
5) Find the blank tape to save the final version of the Emulator program onto and do so by typing RUN 100. (Do not rewind the tape when finished.)
6) Turn on the Spectrum again and type in the following Basic program –
10 RANDOMIZE USR 0.
7) Save the program to the tape after the new version of the Emulator program by typing SAVE "ROMRUM" LINE 10.
8) Reset the SAM and load the new version of the Emulator from the start of the tape by pressing F7.

You should should now possess a standard Spectrum wrapped up in an endearing Coupé case. 48K Speccy games can be loaded by typing LOAD "" (J, Sym P, Sym P in case you've forgotten already), and you should find that about 95% of them work. The ones that don't are probably a bit crap anyway. Brilliant or what?

Of course, it may not be within your capabilities to surpass the brilliance of Richard's humble offering (although who knows?) but if you've got a SAM and you've come up with a juicy little program then do drop me a line. Perhaps by then I'll have wangled one for myself. *(Fat chance. Ed)*

VARITURBO
PT ONE
by Malcolm Goodman

Loading routines have always been popular in Pitstop in the past, so here's another one. This time, as well as just turning the border funny colours and making things move a bit faster, Malcolm Goodman's effort loads things in at two different speeds at the same time.

The only trouble is that it's so long I've had to split it into two with the Basic bit coming first. By all means bash it in and save with SAVE "VARITURBO" LINE 10, but sadly you're going to have to wait for the June issue to key in the rest. Ho hum.

```
  10 CLEAR 64999
  20 LOAD "VARITURBO"+CHR$ 175CO
DE 65000,448
  30 CLS
  40 PRINT "LOAD A SCREEN$. WHEN
 ITS' LOADEDSTART YOUR TAPE IN R
ECORD MODE  AND THEN PRESS A KEY
."
  50 LOAD ""SCREEN$
  60 PAUSE 0
  70 RANDOMIZE USR 65000
  80 CLS : PRINT "NOW REWIND YOU
R TAPE, PRESS ANY KEY THEN PLAY
THE TAPE BACK."
  90 PAUSE 0
 100 RANDOMIZE USR 65200
 110 PAUSE 0: CLS
 120 PRINT "THAT WAS A DEMO OF A
 SAVE/LOAD  ROUTINE IN WHICH THE
 BAUD RATE  SWITCHES BETWEEN TWO
 SPEEDS."
 130 PRINT "AT THE CURRENT TIME
IT IS SET TOSAVE/LOAD A SCREEN$,
 BUT CAN BE ALTERED TO SAVE A FI
LE WITH A   DIFFERENT START ADDR
ESS AND     LENGTH."
 140 PRINT "THE BAUD RATE IS PRE
SENTLY SET  TO SWITCH BETWEEN 15
00 AND ABOUT3000 EVERY 256 BYTES
, AND THE    LOADING STRIPES SWIT
CH COLOUR    WHEN THE RATE ALTERS
."
 150 PRINT "YOU ARE NOW GIVEN TH
E CHANCE TO ALTER THESE VALUES T
O SUIT YOUR OWN NEEDS."
 160 PRINT "JUST FOLLOW THE PROM
PTS SO AS TOCUSTOMISE YOUR OWN '
VARI-TURBO'."
 170 PRINT #0;AT 0,5; FLASH 1;"P
RESS A KEY TO CONTINUE."; FLASH
0
 180 PAUSE 0: CLS
 190 INPUT "WHAT IS THE START AD
DRESS ?";'START:
 200 IF START>65535 THEN  GO TO
190
 210 RANDOMIZE START
 220 POKE 65005,PEEK 23670: POKE
 65006,PEEK 23671
 230 POKE 65205,PEEK 23670: POKE
 65206,PEEK 23671
 240 INPUT "WHAT IS THE FILE LEN
GTH ?";'LENGTH
 250 IF LENGTH=0 OR LENGTH>65535
 THEN  GO TO 240
 260 RANDOMIZE LENGTH
 270 POKE 65001,PEEK 23670: POKE
 65002,PEEK 23671
 280 POKE 65201,PEEK 23670: POKE
 65202,PEEK 23671
 290 INPUT "CHOOSE TWO VALUES FO
R THE LOADERSTRIPES (0-7) ";'COL
1,COL2
 300 IF COL1<0 OR COL1>7 OR COL2
<0 OR COL2>7 THEN  GO TO 290
 310 POKE 65446,COL1: POKE 65447
,COL2
 320 CLS : PRINT "CHOOSE ONE OF
THE FOLLOWING      VALUES TO DECI
DE HOW OFTEN YOU  WOULD LIKE YOU
R VARI-TURBO TO    CHANGE BAUD RA
TES."
 330 PRINT : PRINT "THE HIGHER T
HE VALUE CHOSEN, THELESS OFTEN T
HE CHANGE."
 340 PAUSE 100
 350 INPUT "SWITCH RATE (1-11)
";'BAUD
 360 IF BAUD<1 OR BAUD>11 THEN
GO TO 350
 370 RESTORE (710+(BAUD*10))
 380 READ SWITCH
 390 POKE 65126,SWITCH: POKE 653
28,SWITCH
 400 CLS : PRINT "NOW WE NEED TO
 SET UP THE TWO BAUD RATES THAT
WE ARE GOING TO    USE."
 410 PRINT "YOU CAN SPECIFY ANY
VALUE IN THERANGE x1 TO x2 (e.g.
 1.5 AND 1.226)."
 420 PAUSE 50
 430 INPUT "ENTER BAUD RATE VALU
ES; (x1 - x2)";'TURB1,TURB2
 440 IF TURB1<1 OR TURB1>2 OR TU
RB2<1 OR TURB2>2 THEN  GO TO 430
 450 RESTORE 830
 460 READ S
 470 POKE 65186,S/TURB1: POKE 65
187,S/TURB2
 480 READ S
 490 POKE 65188,S/TURB1: POKE 65
189,S/TURB2
 500 READ S
 510 POKE 65190,S/TURB1: POKE 65
191,S/TURB2
 520 READ S
 530 POKE 65192,S/TURB1: POKE 65
193,S/TURB2
 540 READ S
 550 POKE 65438,S/TURB1: POKE 65
439,S/TURB2
 560 READ S
 570 POKE 65440,S/TURB1: POKE 65
441,S/TURB2
 580 READ S
 590 POKE 65442,S/TURB1: POKE 65
443,S/TURB2
 600 READ S
 610 POKE 65444,S/TURB1: POKE 65
445,S/TURB2
 620 CLS
 630 PRINT "YOUR CUSTOMISED SAVE
 ROUTINE IS NOW AT 65000 AND IS
194 BYTES INLENGTH. ' RANDOMIZE
USR 65000 '  WILL START IT SAVIN
G."
 640 PRINT
 650 PRINT "THE LOAD ROUTINE HAS
 NOW BEEN    CONFIGURED AT 65250
AND IS 248   BYTES LONG. IT CAN B
E CALLED BY ' RANDOMIZE USR 6525
0 '."
 660 PRINT
 670 PRINT "ON YOUR NEXT KEYPRES
S YOUR       SPECTRUM WILL 'NEW'
ITSELF, BUT WILL LEAVE THE CODE
INTACT AT    65000 AND 65250."
 680 PRINT "YOU MAY THEN LOAD IN

 YOUR FILE, AND PROVIDING IT DOE
S NOT OVER- WRITE THE INSTALLED
CODE, SAVINGCAN STARTED USING 'V
ARITURBO'"
 690 PRINT #0;AT 0,0; FLASH 1;"
PRESSING ANY KEY EXCEPT BREAK

     WILL NEW YOUR COMPUTER.     "
; FLASH 0
 700 PAUSE 0
 710 NEW
 720 DATA 67
 730 DATA 75
 740 DATA 83
 750 DATA 91
 760 DATA 99
 770 DATA 107
 780 DATA 115
 790 DATA 123
 800 DATA 66
 810 DATA 74
 820 DATA 82
 830 DATA 59,66,62,49,176,178,20
3,22
 840 STOP
 850 SAVE "VARITURBO" LINE 10: S
AVE "VARITURBO"+CHR$ 175CODE 650
00,448
9999 REM THIS ROUTINE OR OBVIOUS
 VARIATIONS MAY NOT BE USED COMM
ERCIALLY WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF
S.M.GOODMAN.
```

continued next month

BREAK OUT
by David Robertson

Nothing's more annoying, I always think, than those people who find it amusing to wait until you've finished your latest masterpiece and then press Break and muck about with it. Well, apart from the teaspoon you always find at the bottom of the washing-up bowl when you tip the water out, maybe. And adverts on telly that start off looking as though they're going to be really exciting, and then turn out to be for some kind of investment savings insurance plan. But I can't think of anything else.

David Robertson has come up with the solution this time, in the form of a couple of lines of Basic that, once run, will generate a block of code that can be saved out and incorporated into the program you want to protect. Once you've got the code in memory, calling it with RANDOMIZE USR 60000 (or wherever you've chosen to put the code – it's relocatable) will lock out the Break key and cause any other error to crash the computer. Be careful how you use it, though, and make sure you RANDOMIZE USR whatever after using Load and Save.

```
  10 CLEAR 59999: FOR f=60000 TO
 60026: READ a: POKE f,a: NEXT f
: SAVE "BreakOut"CODE 60000,27
  20 DATA 33,15,0,167,237,74,229
,193,42,61,92
  30 DATA 113,35,112,201,237,123
,61,92,33,58,92,54,255,195,125,2
7
```

Erm...

....And that's it. I can tell that you're overwhelmed by it all, aren't you? Well, once you've got your breath back, how about having a crack at a bit of key-prodding yourself? Just think of it – fame and fortune virtually overnight (or at least one of the two, anyway). Do your worst then, and send the ensuing product to me. And the address, for those who missed it earlier, is Program Pitstop, *YS*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2AP. (The West Country, eh? I feel homesick just thinking about it...)

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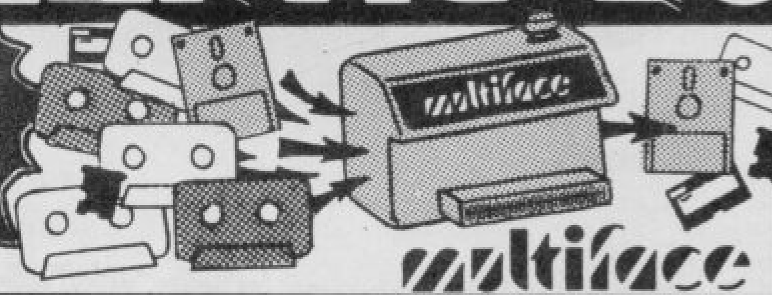
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YS

CRACKDOWN

US Gold/£9.99 cass/£14.99 disk

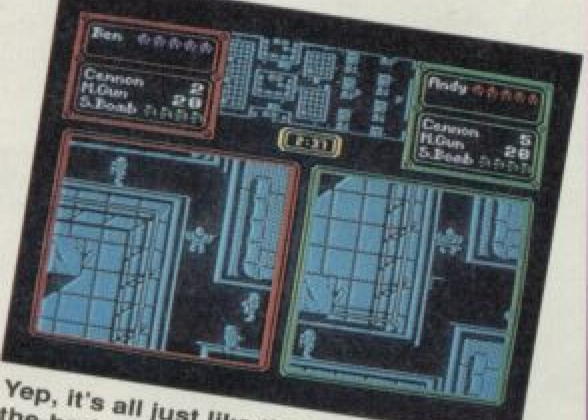


Kati Cripes! One minute I'm playing on a huge *Crackdown* machine in my local arcade and the next I'm plonked in front of the Speccy doing exactly the same thing. Is this a vision or a waking dream? Nope, it's the latest snappy coin-op conversion from US Gold. Phew! Quel relief, I thought I was a gonner there.

So what's the game about exactly? Well, it's all got rather a lot to do with an evil little fella called Dr K. Laughing like a lunatic and twiddling his waxed moustache, he's out to create an army of biogenetically-engineered humanoids which he's going to use to set up a lawn mower factory. Oops. Sorry. I mean take over the world.

Aha! But there are two factors the dastardly doc forgot – Andy Attacker and Ben Breaker, efficient FBI agents with a cunning plan. (Well, with a couple of names like that they couldn't have run a funeral parlour, could they?) Bazooka in hand, shades at the ready, these cool dudes (or just one if you haven't got any friends) run like the blazes straight up to the scientist's secret hideout. Blimey! It's a huge 16-level fortress inhabited solely by the sinful surgeon's android buddies – and these sinister synthetic subordinates aren't afraid to die, no siree. Basically, you've got to plant three detonation devices on each split-screen level (X marks the spot) and leg it out of there before they explode. You're helped in this task by a map at the top of the screen which gives a rough idea of where you are (although you only appear as the weeniest pinprick so you might need a magnifying glass) and there's also a table to show how much ammo you've got left.

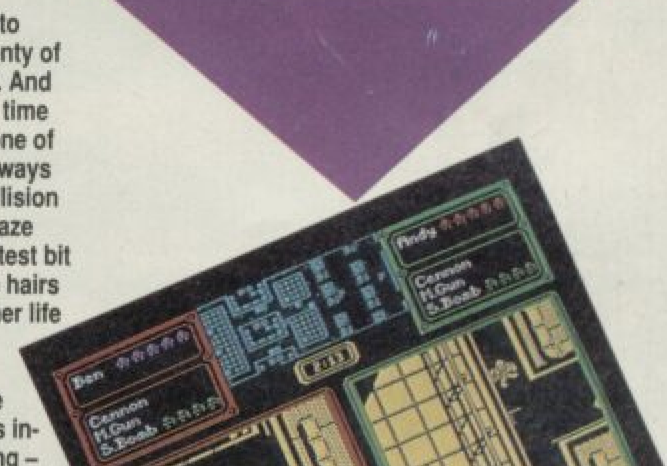
Talking of ammo, each of the lads has three potential weapons – a rocket launcher (big flashy number), a gun (naff pea shooter) and a superbomb (wipes anything in the vicinity off the face of the lab). But don't panic if you run out. Extra supplies are lying about the place in handy pick-up packs. Hooray!



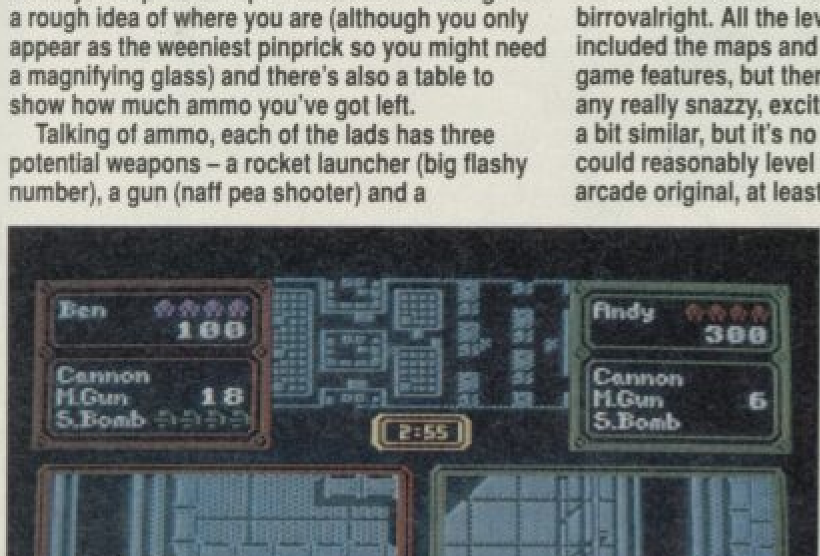
Yep, it's all just like the let's-blow-up-the-baddie-base bit from a Bond film.

If you don't come a cropper by walking into poisonous pools of acid slime, there are plenty of kamikaze androids about out to get you too. And by crikey there's no stopping this lot. Every time you walk past a monster generator it spits one of the vicious chappies out – and they don't always play by the rules. For a start, they've got collision detection on their side. Very crafty. If you graze them with a bullet it won't do them the slightest bit of damage, but if they touch so much as the hairs on your ears, that's it, finished, kaput, another life gone. Not exactly cricket, is it?

As a conversion then, *Crackdown* is a birrovalright. All the levels are there, they've included the maps and most of the coin-op's in-game features, but there's something missing – any really snazzy, exciting gameplay. It might look a bit similar, but it's no *Gauntlet*, and while you could reasonably level the same criticism at the arcade original, at least that's got fantastic graphics and a corker of a soundtrack to keep you interested when the action flags a bit. On the monochrome Speccy it's a tad difficult to distinguish some of the graphics, the map is hopeless and the aforementioned collision detection is a bit of a pain. It's not bad as such, but it's difficult to get into a lather over it – haven't we seen enough games already that boil down to just a bit of shooting and collecting? A perfectly smoothly programmed bit of shooting and collecting admittedly, but nothing more than that. If you like your games vindaloo-hot (and who doesn't?) then you might be disappointed.



Right. Time to get your skates on, matey. Only a couple of minutes 'til she blows!



Yes, you're right, it looks just like *Gauntlet* split into two screens. Because of this each play area is fairly tiny and you're often hard-pushed to tell what's round the next corner – the map at the top's far too squitty to be much help either.

finalverdict

80 60 40 20

LIFE EXPECTANCY	GRAPHICS	ADDICTIVENESS
69°	69°	73°

DIAGNOSIS

A natty conversion of a coin-op which was good, but not that good. Suck it and see.

INSTANT APPEAL 78°

76°

CASTLE



Right, here we are on the outside of the castle at the start of the game. Which way now? (Into the castle, I reckon - but how? There's a poxy moat in the way.)

Incentive/£9.99 cass/£14.99 disk



Matt Aaargh! I've just been dropped in the catacombs again (a vast underground warren with oodles of ways in and, as far as I can tell, hardly any ways out)! I seem to be ending up down here with monotonous regularity. Fall down the well and you end up in the catacombs. Nose around the dark space at the back of the pulpit – straight to the catacombs! Drain the water at the bottom of the pool, investigate the entrance there and would you know it – cata-bloody-combs, here I come! Aaargh! (Do you get the feeling I'm getting a little frustrated here, readers?)



This way, methinks! Over the drawbridge (I just opened it with a stone).



Here we are in the courtyard, with some stables, a well and various doors. Hmm.

I'm playing *Castle Master*, you see. Sort of against my better judgement actually. (I was going to get someone with a bit of patience like Jonathan Davies or Davey Wilson to have a go at it, but would you believe it comes in on disk? And how many *YS* reviewers have +3s? Not many, which is why muggins here is having a crack at it!) I suppose you want to know why I was so reluctant to have a go. Well, basically (and whisper it so no-one can hear) I was the teensiest little bit intimidated by it. Yep, I know every Incentive Freescape outing has been true Megagame material and everything, but when it comes down to it I've never actually played any of them. Not properly, anyway. (Oh, sure, I've marvelled at the graphics and spent a bit of time wandering around looking at things, but actually get involved in the gameplay? Nah, not me, mate. I don't understand it.)

Which is why I've got myself a couple of little helpers for this review. Over my right shoulder we have Rich Pelley, who's visiting ("...but not for long enough to write the review, oh no!") and who's had a go at all the Freescape games at one time or another. Then over my left shoulder it's my good friend Trenton from *Amstrad Action* (one of our new sister mags) who's reviewing the CPC version at a desk just around the corner even as I speak. He keeps shouting "Have you got to the third floor yet?" or whatever all the time. (No, I blooming well haven't! Just because you're better than me...)

Anyway, I'll bring my two little chums in more towards the end when we get to summing up time (though the way Rich keeps whispering the word 'Megagame' in my ear I fear it's a bit of a foregone conclusion). Ah well, on with the plot.

Like the other Freescape games it's a search-around-collecting-things, working-out-the-use-for-other-things, finding-secret-routes sort of game. Touchingly non-sexist, it features you as a prince (or princess – the first choice you have to make in the game) nosing around a spooky, seemingly deserted castle in search of your kidnapped twin. He (or she) is trapped in one of the towers by Magister, the Castle Master (hence the name), and guarded by a series of Guardian Spirits. It's your job to get him (or her) out!

It's a game strong on puzzles and high in atmosphere – if you should find yourself alone in the house, try turning the lights down low and then playing it. You'd scare yourself silly. I felt a few shivers pass up my spine, I can tell you, and I was in a packed office with my two little Spec-chums peering over my shoulder!

But anyway, less of this messing about, let's start the game. A neat portcullis device pulls up from the front of the screen and – tarra! – a castle is revealed! A Freescape castle, to be exact, so let's walk around it and see what we can see. Dum de dum de dum. Right, it appears to be surrounded by a black moat (I thought it was the shadow cast by the walls until I fell into it and 'Glug glug glug!' appeared in the message panel. Very droll.) At the back of it at one corner there's a shed (can't get in it though – no key) and what looks like a rock at another corner, but otherwise the plain is featureless. Time to go in the castle then, and there's only one way to do that – across the drawbridge. Hmm. The drawbridge is up.

A quick bit of faffing around (and reading the instruction notes) gave me a clue. Switch the centre screen cursor from Movement mode (where pushing forward moves you in the direction you've placed the cursor) to Throw mode, place it over the suspicious-looking nobble high up on the castle wall and press fire. Bingo! Your character lobs a stone at the building, and the drawbridge drops down. Time to go exploring!

Right, now we're in a courtyard. There are four towers at the four corners, some of which have doors. As well as this though, there are a couple of extra entrances to various lean-to buildings actually built inside the courtyard. Let's have a

MASTER

YOUR SINCLAIR MEGAGAME

scout around. Hmmm. There's a well. Let's take a look (but not too close a look – we don't want to fall in and end up in the catacombs, do we?). Lean over it, use the Action key (which allows you to eat, drink, read, push, move, collect, examine, open, unlock or use as appropriate) and hurrah! I've collected a key, which must have been hidden somewhere in the well, though I never saw it. (Later keys, and other collectable objects like potions, are usually perfectly visible, however).

That little success under my belt, I think it's time to actually venture inside the castle. Which doorway shall we choose? I know, this one! It seems to lead into a sort of spooky chapel. Hmm. Wonder what we can find in here? What about behind this pulpit? *(Don't do it! Reader's Voice)* Too late! I've tumbled into the catacombs! AGAIN!

Now this may not necessarily be a bad thing. The catacombs are basically long stretches of empty, featureless corridors, with plenty of turn-offs into other long featureless corridors and occasional doorways into... ah, but you guessed it. I've not found anything of interest down here, but that's not to say there aren't things lurking away in the corners, and I've only come across one way out so far, which I'm damned if I can find again. Basically I'm stuck down here, and very tempted to quit the game and start again. In fact, I think I will. (Quit.)

Right, here we are standing outside the castle again. Let's throw a rock at the button, open the doorbridge, walk into the courtyard, blah, blah, blah. Hmm? Wonder which entrance to take this time...

And so it goes.

The genius of these Incentive things seems to be to wind you up as much as possible, really get you hacked off with the whole business, then drop a little titbit your way – finding a key, unearthing a secret doorway, or running into another spooky spirit. These'll kill you if you let them, as well as make the room go a strange flashing red colour, but a well-aimed rock will normally settle their hash. If ever there was a fine balance between total addiction and total frustration this seems to be it.

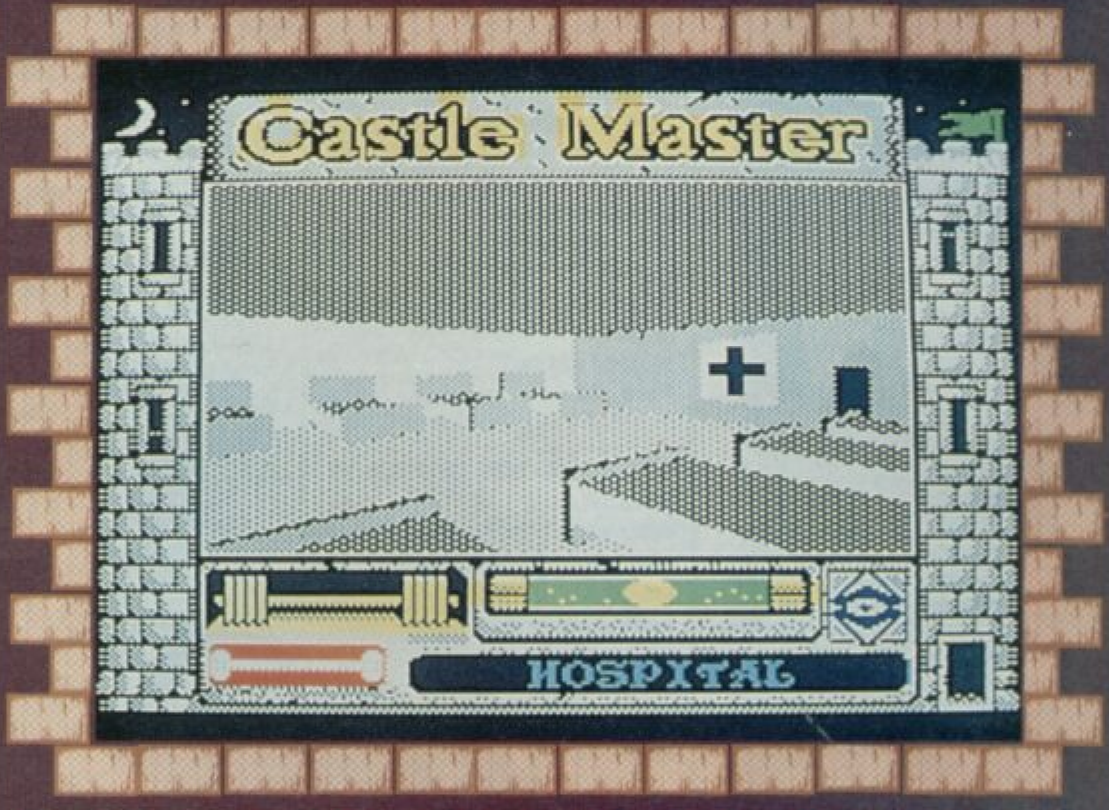
The only problem with this review so far *(What do you mean the only problem? Reader's voice)* is that it could apply to any Freescape game at all, more or less. In what ways is this one different? Well, let's consult my two little Freescape experts and see what they have to say. (Excuse me for a second – talk amongst yourselves.)

Right, I'm back. Basically, we reckon the much-vaunted new Freescape+ system (seen here for the first time), which is meant to offer a 10% increase in game movement speed over normal Freescape (as well as draw things in smaller blocks, so they're more recognisable), is a significant improvement over the previous system. The game certainly runs faster than previous Freescape games. But it's also a lot slower. *(Eh? Reader's voice)*

Let me explain. It's not physically slower (like I said, it's quicker), but the game design seems tailored to a different pace of gameplay, something a bit more precise and thought-out. For instance, whereas in, say, *Total Eclipse*, any key would open any door, here you need a specific key for each one, or so it seems. There seems to be a lot more searching around involved here, looking for the correct pieces then figuring out how to use them, though of course these first impressions could be deceiving, and the games always did seem to lean in that direction anyway. It's certainly not your rushing-around-shooting-everything sort of game.

So we come to the conclusion. Those who are already familiar with the Freescape system are probably out queuing up to buy the thing even as we speak, so let's talk to those who are left (the unconverted) for a moment. Right, you lot. I really think you should consider buying this – unless you're a real die-hard action game freak. This is a game that stretches the capabilities of your Speccy to breaking point, is guaranteed to provide weeks of gameplay and has an incredibly professional, thought-out (and spooky) feel to it. Even the instructions and in-game puzzles devised by 'Europe's Funniest Man' (Mel Croucher) aren't too bad.

All in all then, Incentive seems to have another winner (and another Megagame) on its hands. Yep, just like Pelley kept telling me all along. (Smug git.)



Okay, we've managed to get inside, and what have we found? Yes, it's a hospital! (I know because it says in the message window.) Actually, it does look a bit like one (they seem to have got drawing in Freescape pretty sussed by now).



Be careful now – any false moves could lead to the catacombs. (They did for me!)

finalverdict

LIFE EXPECTANCY	GRAPHICS	ADDICTIVENESS	INSTANT APPEAL
92°	90	94°	88°

DIAGNOSIS

An excellent (and spooky) addition to the Freescape canon – faster graphics, lovely presentation. A must!

93°

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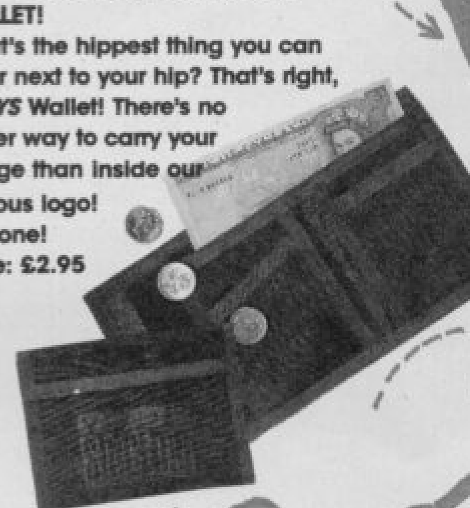
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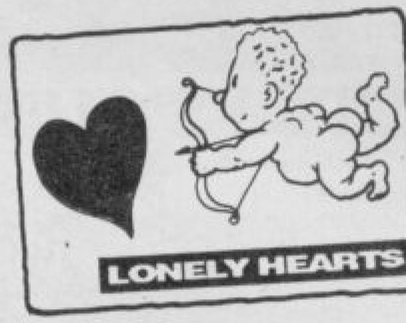
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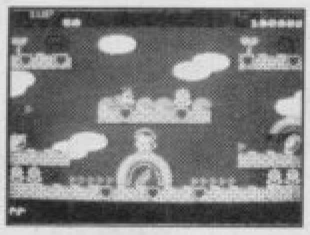
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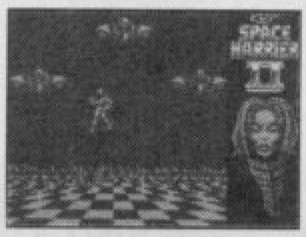
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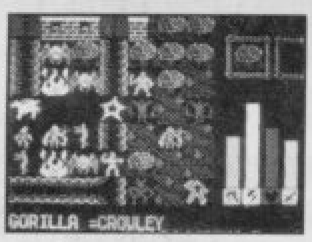
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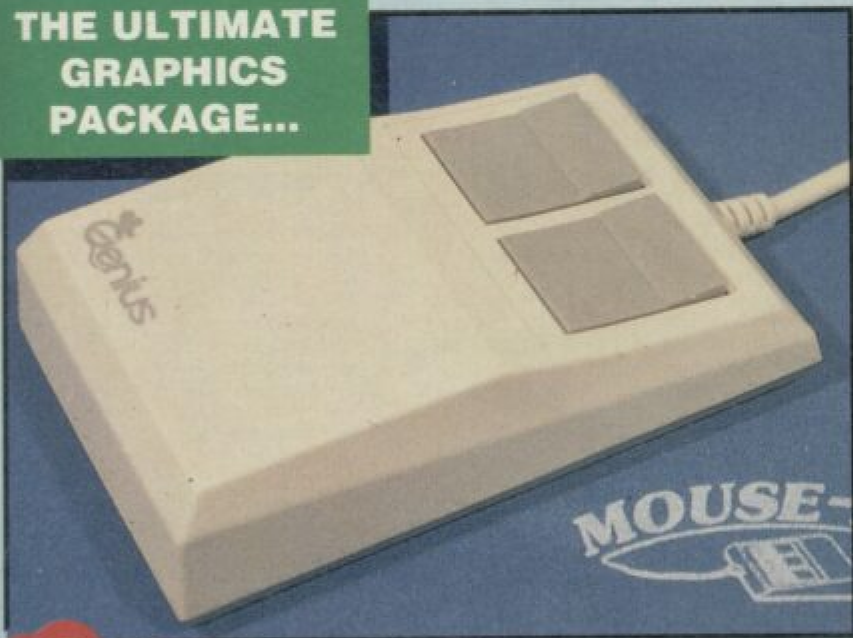
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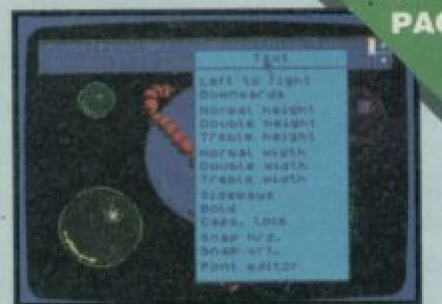
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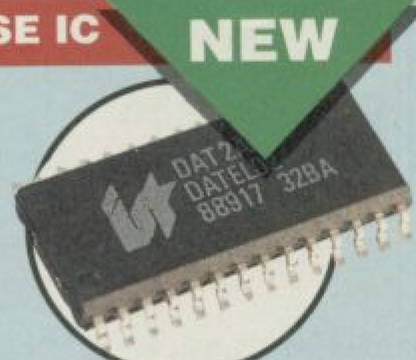


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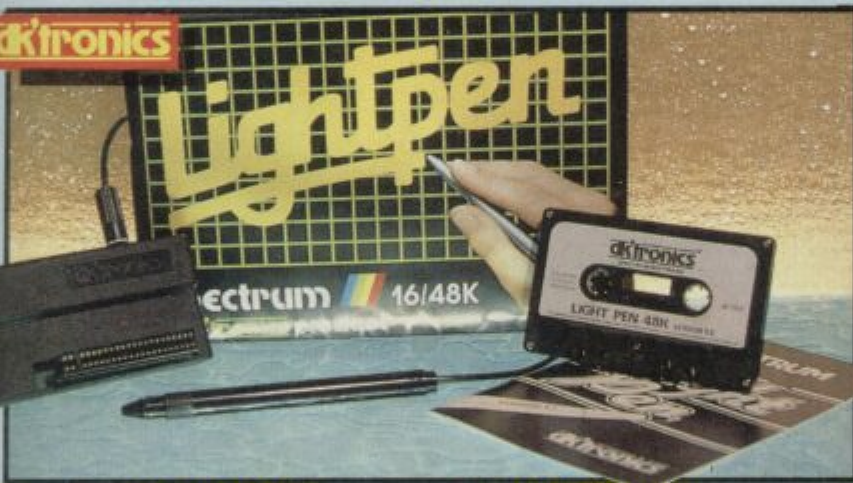
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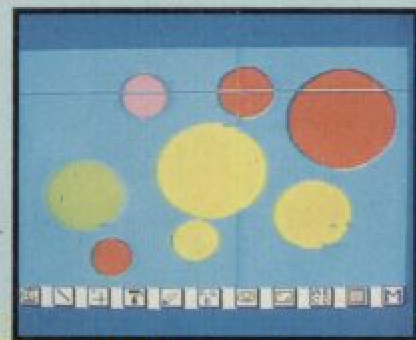
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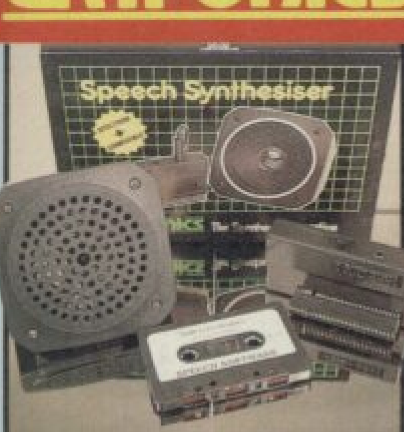


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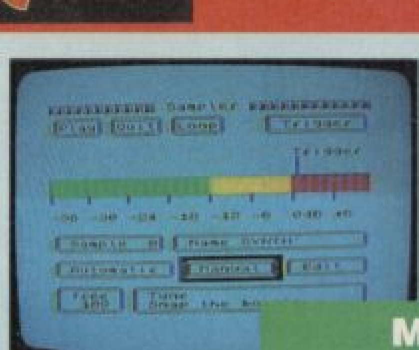
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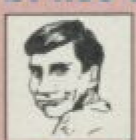
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Completely useless. Not only is the container almost full, there are no decent patterns. Whoever took this screenshot may as well give up now.

KL

Domark/Tengen/£9.99 cass/ £14.99 disk



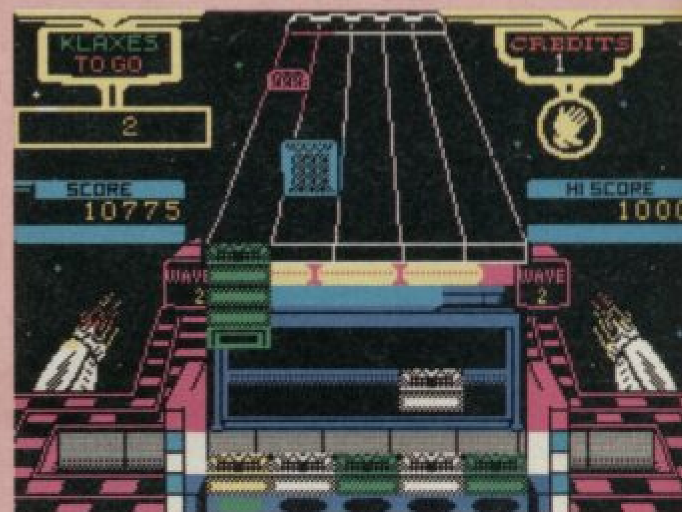
Jonathan Right, let's see if I can stagger through this whole review without mentioning *Tetris* once. Oops, that's blown it. Oh well, while we're at it, *Klax* does indeed bear a remarkable resemblance to *Tetris*, that Russian game with coloured blocks sliding about all over the place. But that's enough of that.

So what does *Klax* actually involve? It's a bit odd, really. You control a *Batty*-style bat, which sits at the bottom of a conveyor belt. Its sole function in life is to move left and right and catch little coloured blocks as they come whizzing down the conveyor belt towards it. Once it's caught them it can either hang onto them for a bit, drop them into the container at the bottom of the screen or chuck them back again. For those tempted by the latter option, it should be stressed that these blocks tend to find their way back again.

But there's more to it than that. To score loads of points and get onto the next level you need to drop the blocks so that they make patterns in the container (lines, diagonals, crosses, that kind of thing). The more complicated the pattern, the more points you get. Once you've made one, the blocks that made it up disappear, making room for you to chuck some more in.

And one other thing – if you're lucky you'll come across weird flashing blocks which alternate between all the different colours. Did I mention colours? Right, well blocks do in fact come in different colours, and the patterns (they're actually called 'Klaxes', but that sounds ridiculous) have to contain blocks that are all the same colour. So these flashing ones are a kind of universal block which can be used as anything.

There are piles of levels, and each one has a



Oh dear. One life left and still no patterns. This bloke's rubbish.

IMPOSS



Here we are on Level Two (the Chinese level). Doesn't look all that Chinese, does it?

Gremlin/£9.99 cass/£14.99 disk



Matt It's a bit of an 'almost' game this one, I'm afraid. I wanted to like it, I really did. (Heck, I wanted to write lots of lovely things about it, give it a Megagame, say "Welcome back, Monty, why'd you stay away so long?", things like that.) But, um, I can't really. *Impossamole* is... okay. Erm, well perhaps it's a bit better than okay, but it's no *Rainbow Islands*, no *New Zealand Story*, no *Rick Dangerous* and no *Wonderboy*. (Perhaps we've just been spoilt by the frighteningly high standard of graphics and gamesplay in coin-op conversions recently, I don't know.)

Don't get me wrong though – *Impossamole* isn't a terrible game, just a disappointing one. It could (and should) have been a lot better than it is, not the slightly old-fashioned, rather empty and a tiny bit ill-conceived plodder we've ended up with. To beat the Japanese at this sort of thing you've got to be perfect, or near as dammit (just like they are), and 'perfect' isn't quite the word that springs to mind when you first see the new-look Monty Mole. (I think 'silly' is closer, actually.)

I mean, just look at the poor chap. Not only does he resemble a rather unhappy pig with a cape on more than any sort of mole I've ever seen (something confirmed by his basic fighting move – a kick – which reveals him to have trotters!) but he looks faintly uncomfortable throughout the game. Take his tree-climbing posture (please, take it!). Is that a fat slug wiggling away there, or what? His bat-like gliding pose is even worse! (What was wrong with going for a much simpler main sprite, that's what I'd like to know. In *Rainbow Islands*, *Wonderboy* – and even *Dizzy*! – our heroes were hardly animated at all, and worked perfectly. Monty tries too hard and comes across a bit dumb.)

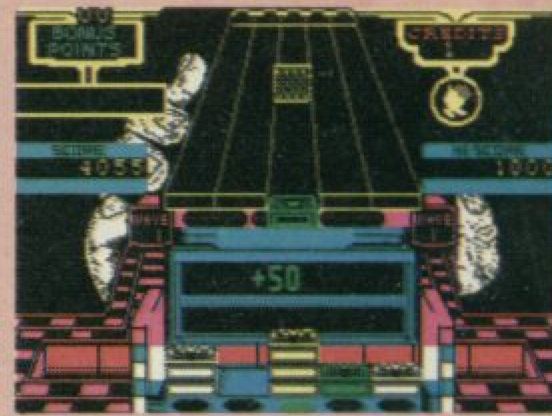


The snowy area is one of the best, with cable cars to jump across and so on. (The scrolling and some of the collision detection are fairly ropey though.)

The general standard of gameplay 'isn't quite there' either. Collision detection is generally ropey, attack patterns poorly timed, there's too little to collect and not enough to climb. Baddies are sadly thin on the ground too, and Monty himself is much too plodding, weak and slow. (It's not a beat-'em-up – he shouldn't have to faff around hitting baddies two or three times before they die.)

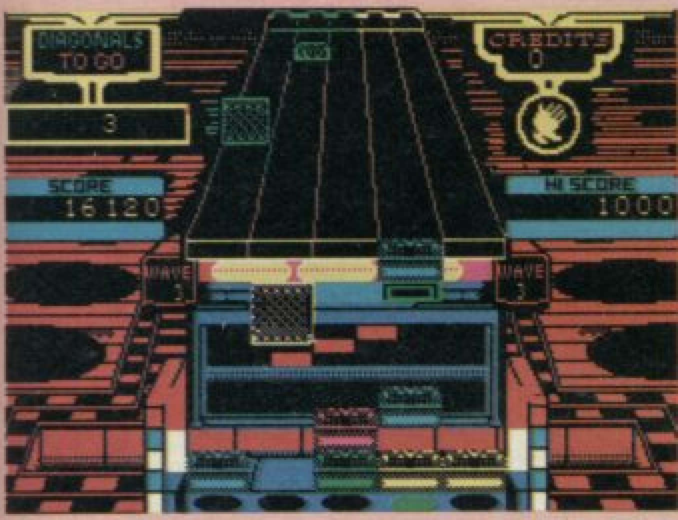
On the plus side, however, all five levels seem to be of a pretty high standard graphically, with lots of colour (and a fair amount of colour clash appearing too, unfortunately). Most of the sprites are quite well drawn (though nothing stunning), but I was a bit disappointed at how little has been done with the various themes of each level. The mine bit and the jungle are pretty run-of-the-mill, while I played the

AX



Oo-er! A huge hand! More importantly, though, we've just scored 50 points. Woah!

different background (some of which are decidedly strange) and a different target to meet before you go onto the next level. This is generally to get a certain number of a particular pattern without letting too many blocks go zooming off the conveyor belt into oblivion.



Yikes! Last life, no patterns, a pathetic score and a horrible red background.

And it's quite good fun, actually. It takes a while to work out what's going on, but when it suddenly clicks then you're rolling, as it were. There's all sorts of strategy involved, such as whether you want to go for lots of little patterns and get the points that way, or go for a massive big one (like the 'X', which takes nerves of steel).

The graphics are a bit patchy, but they do their stuff, and the sound's fairly good too, with little tunes and bits of sampled speech. Not that it would matter if they were a load of crap, of course, as having fun is what it's all about.

These coloured block strategy things will always be hits, I reckon. You just can't go wrong with them. And as coloured block strategy things go, *Klax* is a winner. I think *Tetris* probably has the edge, but perhaps I shouldn't be making comparisons anyway.

finalverdict

80 60 40 20

LIFE EXPECTANCY	GRAPHICS	ADDICTIVENESS
85°	70°	88°

DIAGNOSIS

If coloured blocks sound like your cup of tea, this could be for you (with two sugars). It's really quite good.

INSTANT APPEAL 69°

81°

SAMOLE

Oriental level about four times before realising it was meant to be set in the Far East! I thought it was an orchard or something, and those blokes attacking me were gardeners! How disappointing.

Actually, the best of an uninspired bunch is probably the Switzerland-style mountain bit, though even here there's far too little to do, only one way to go, and some very jerky scrolling messing the gameplay about a bit (a flip screen might have been a better idea if they were having these problems).

(By the way, if you're like me you're probably trying to puzzle out what the connection is between these four very different locations. And if you're like me you've probably come up with an answer – there isn't one, they just seemed like a good idea to someone somewhere at the time. What a pity they didn't make each one a bit more interesting.)

And so to the conclusion. Despite lots of colour, some occasionally nifty touches and the return of an old favourite character, *Impossamole* is a bit of a disappointment. What it lacks is any really well thought out puzzles or gameplay. Throughout the game there's just one way to go, one way to avoid (or confront) a problem, one baddy to face at a time, and, well, there should be a lot more. There should also be more things to collect, more platforms to climb, more secret rooms, more of everything really.

Sorry, but *Impossamole* comes across as a mid-'80s Spectrum character all tarted up with coin-op style trimmings and ending up looking faintly ridiculous. It's too slow, too pedestrian, too ill thought-out and too empty of interesting characters! Perhaps I've been very hard on what is, after all, a reasonably colourful and pretty platform game, but I was expecting, or maybe just hoping for, a little more. It's not just that things like *Rainbow Islands* are incredibly hard acts to follow (though they are), it's that *Impossamole* isn't really inspiring by any standards, even by those of the old Monty Mole games.



Is it a bird? Is it a bat? Is it a very stupid-looking mole? (Right third time.) Monty seems to be approaching some giant candles.



The first level – pretty pillars, giant diamonds and, um, that's about it.

finalverdict

80 60 40 20

LIFE EXPECTANCY	GRAPHICS	ADDICTIVENESS
72°	78°	69°

DIAGNOSIS

Nice to see Monty back, but this really is a pretty uninspired platform and ladders romp. Better luck next time.

INSTANT APPEAL 74°

73°

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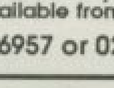
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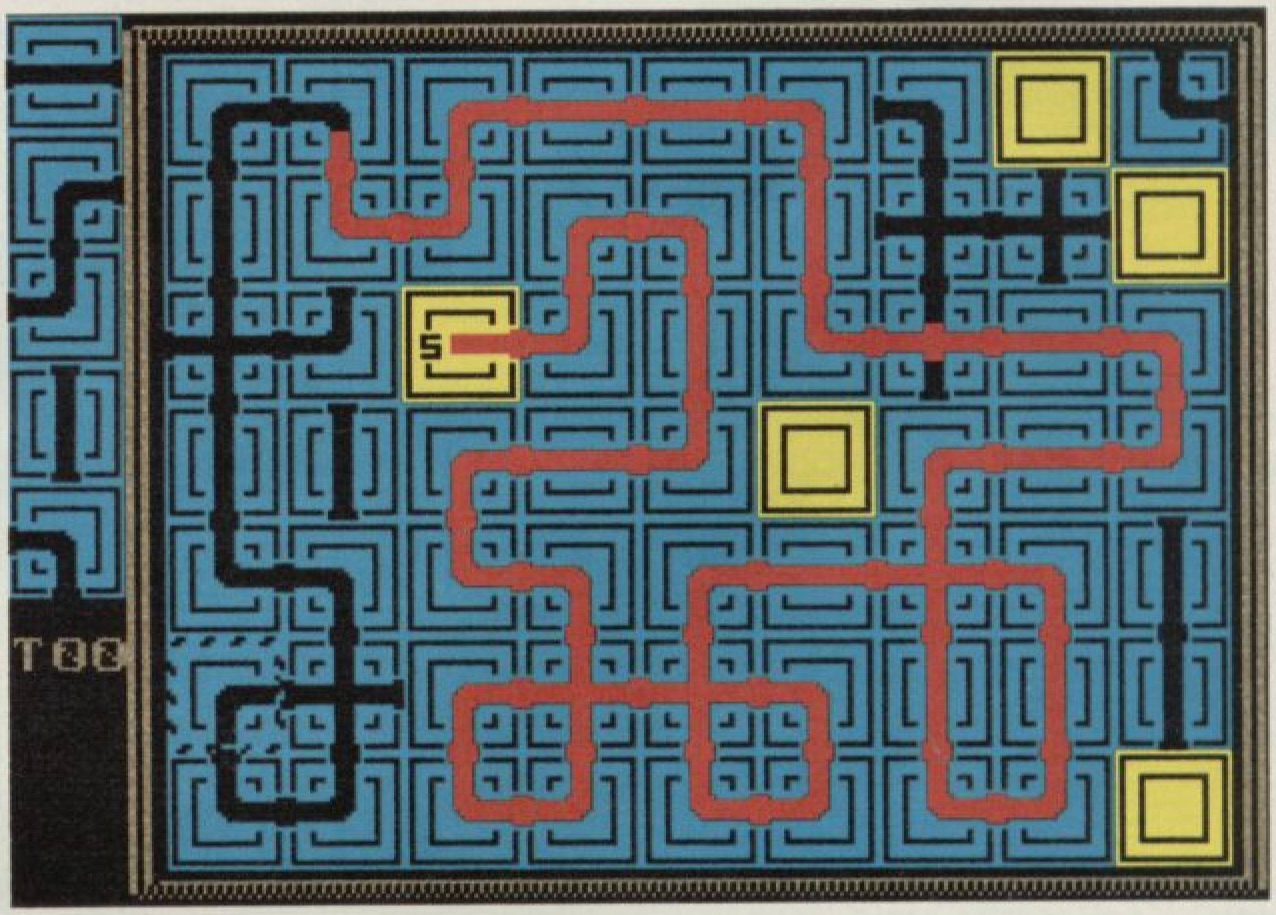
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SHOCKS

The sun is shining, the birds are tweeting away. It looks like we may be in for another long hot summer. And it'll be a hot one Spec-wise too, that's for sure, with oodles of groovy games lined up for release over the coming months, including...



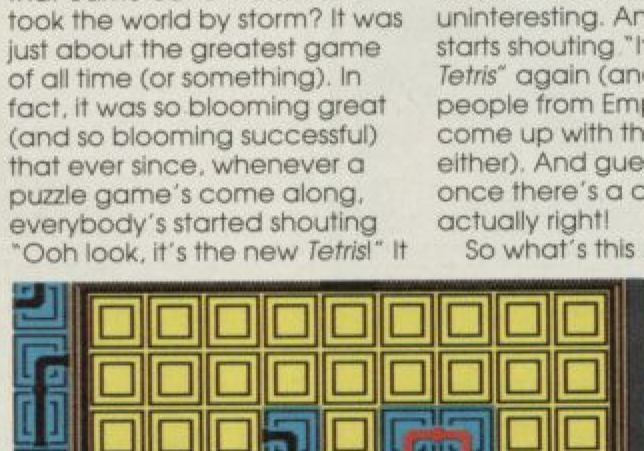
The water (indicated in red) is flowing away there, but we're a good 11 pieces of piping in front of it, with more to come. Check out the box second row up, far left – that's where our cursor is at the moment.

Pipe Mania
Empire

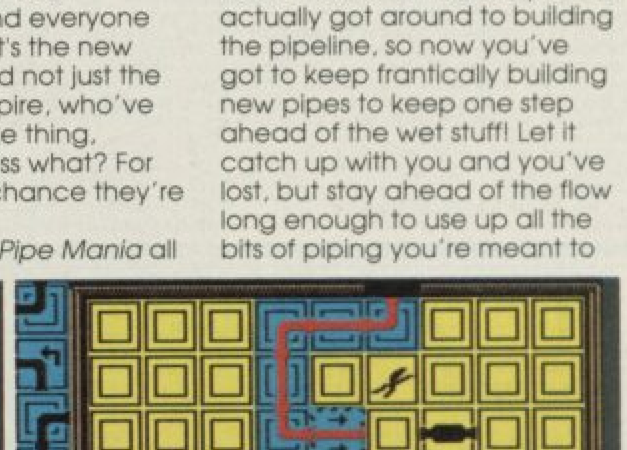
Remember *Tetris*? The incredibly simple (but incredibly, incredibly addictive) little puzzle game that came out of Russia and took the world by storm? It was just about the greatest game of all time (or something). In fact, it was so blooming great (and so blooming successful) that ever since, whenever a puzzle game's come along, everybody's started shouting "Ooh look, it's the new *Tetris*!" It never is of course, but that hasn't stopped them shouting it.

And then along comes *Pipe Mania*. It's a puzzle game. It's rather simple. It looks, as you can probably see from the screenshots, a little bit uninteresting. And everyone starts shouting "It's the new *Tetris*" again (and not just the people from Empire, who've come up with the thing, either). And guess what? For once there's a chance they're actually right!

So what's this *Pipe Mania* all about then? Well, it really is as simple as simple can be. It's all about water. And pipes. You see, you're a plumber (or something), but you've got a problem! Somebody rather uncharitably keeps turning the flow of water on before you've actually got around to building the pipeline, so now you've got to keep frantically building new pipes to keep one step ahead of the wet stuff! Let it catch up with you and you've lost, but stay ahead of the flow long enough to use up all the bits of piping you're meant to



Blimmin' 'eck! The water's gone off the bottom of the picture! (What now?)



Blimey! What's going on here? There seem to be obstacles all over the place! (Check out our review next issue for the explanation!)



get rid of on that level, and you've won. Piece of cake, eh?

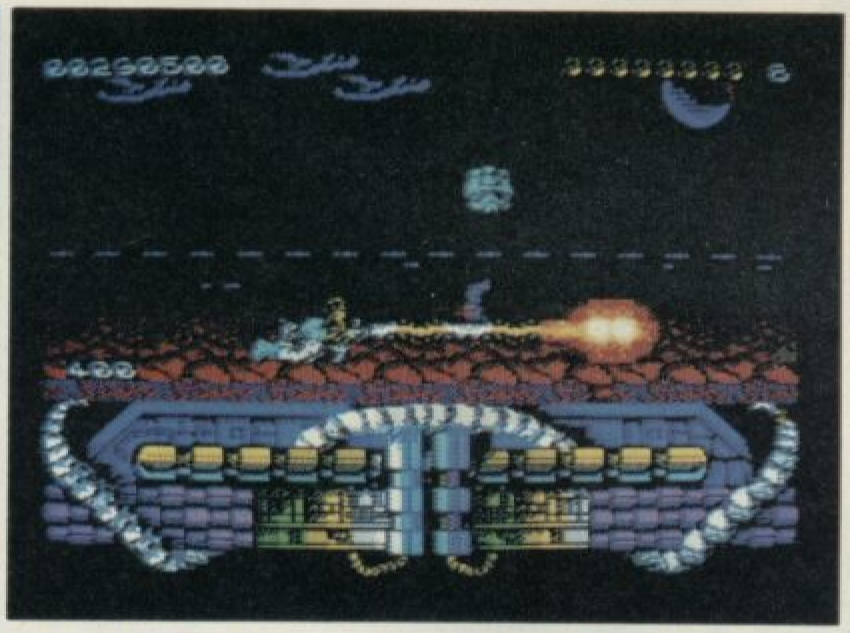
Well, no actually, it's not. You see, they've added all sorts of other little bits and pieces to complicate the game (especially on the later levels). We'll get onto those in a minute, but first let's start off with a quick go at the game to see exactly how it's all meant to work.

Right, kick-off time, and we're faced with an empty grid covering the bulk of the screen – empty, that is, except for a single yellow block (your starting point). Pipe sections start to appear in the dispenser at the side of the screen, so you move your cursor around the place, dumping the bits roughly where you want them as they appear.

There's nothing to say you have to place them in order though – you could put a few you don't immediately know what to do with over on the far side of the screen somewhere, with the idea that later on you'll be able to bring your pipe round to join up with them. Of course, the time will come when you find you've got yourself totally stuck, with the wrong bits of pipe in the wrong places, the water gurgling its way towards you, and nothing you can possibly do about any of it. Nothing, that is, except bomb the offending piece of piping out of existence, and replace it with a new section! (Don't do this too often though, it costs time and points.)

As you progress up the levels, the amount of time you're given to construct a pipeline before the water starts to flow gets smaller, the liquid rushes through the pipes faster, and obstacles appear on the grid which you can't 'bomb'. (Drat it!) There's other extra stuff too, like one-way pieces (which the liquid can only flow through one way, obviously), set places where the flow must end up, and sections where you can lead the flow off one side of the screen and back on the other (like the way the space-ship works in *Asteroids*).

All in all *Pipe Mania* looks like it'll be a stunningly addictive little number (perhaps even a *YS* all-time favourite). Check out the review next issue to find out why! (Release date? Any day now!)



Aha! Our hero seems to have collected some kind of mega-flame-thrower weapon. (In fact, it looks so mega and heavy that the sheer weight of it has forced the poor chap to his knees.)

Astro Marine Corps
Dinamic

As any fule noe, Dinamic is Spain's finest software house – in fact, as far as Speccy owners are concerned, it's more or less Spain's only software house. Dinamic has one more claim to fame though – it's well-known (some would say infamous) for producing some of the hardest, most impossibly difficult games known to man. *Army Moves*, *Navy Moves*, *After The War* and (especially) *Grand Prix Master*, each and every one of them soon had Speccy owners across the nation pulling their hair out in frustration.

And then what happened? Well nothing much (it's been a bit quiet of late), but not for much longer, because its latest unfeasibly hard (at a guess) extravaganza is about to hit the shops even as we speak! It's called *Astro Marine Corps* (*AMC* to its friends) and it's a multi-level arcade adventure cum shoot-'em-up, not unlike the previous *After The War* in fact, but this time in lovely bright colours and with less of a beat-'em-up feel to it.

You play a sort of lone Space Marine (from the Astro Marine Corps, of course) on a mission to destroy the Deathbringers, a group of intergalactic criminals of many different species who are out to conquer the galaxy.

You come equipped with nine different sorts of weapon, from grenades, flame-throwers and photolasers to temporary invulnerability, three-way directional guns and smart bomb-type things, all of which are collectable en route, of course.



Here we are entering a sort of platform section, with what looks like the triple-directional firing gun at the ready. (Don't quote us though – it's only a guess!)

Baddies are equally varied, ranging from giant robots on two huge metal legs (a similar thing appeared in *After The War*) to huge alien reptile beings, and, of course, the big Deathbringer boss (apparently a cyborg of some description).

It all sounds very exciting, doesn't it, and the screenshots certainly look nice and colourful. And what's more, it'll be available any day now! Why not check it out?



Hurrah! A baddy at last! Looks like our hero's decided to attack a sort of walking tree. (By the way, isn't it really neat the way the icon panel in the bottom part of the screen seems to be changing with every shot?)



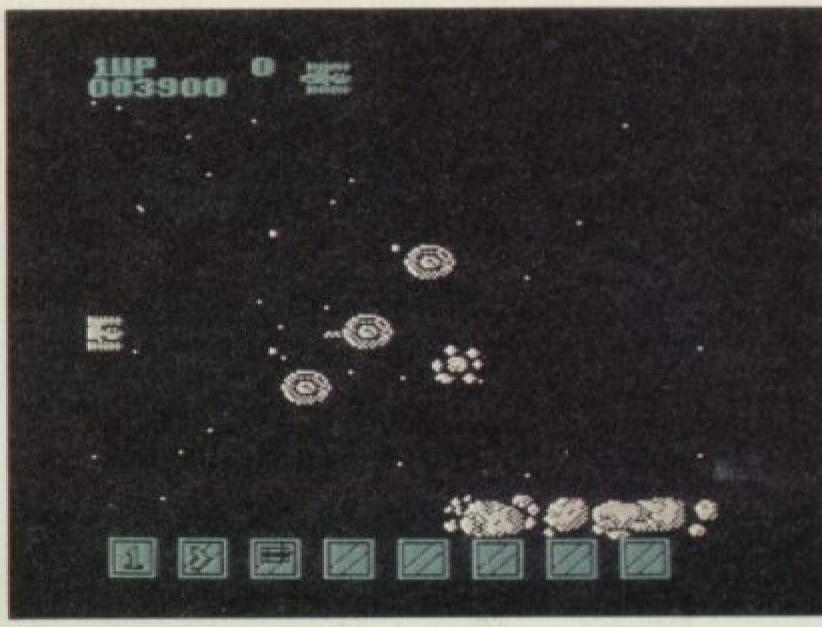
Wa-hey! Now we're cookin'! I seem to have collected a defensive shield-thing as well as the triple firing gun doobrie! Is it any wonder the alien trees I've decided to kill seem to be running like the blazes?

Delta Charge!
Thalamus

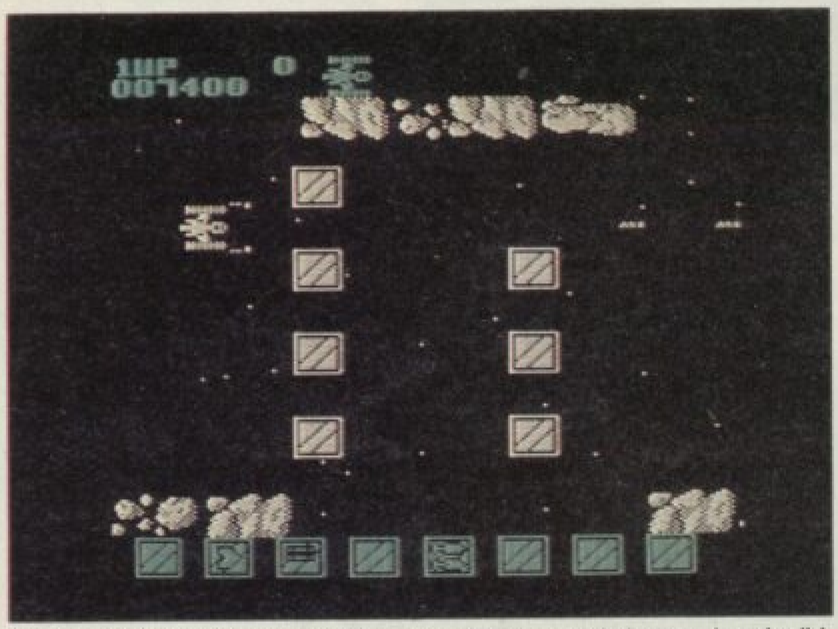
This is *Delta Charge!*, the first new release in, ooh, yonks from Thalamus. (The last one, if you remember, was *Sanxion – The Spectrum Remix* back in the summer of '89). As you can probably see, it's a fairly unremarkable looking horizontal-scrolling shoot-'em-up, though of course that doesn't mean it won't be as playable as anything (the proof of the pudding being in the eating and so on).

There are 20 levels, seven add-on weapons, and all the usual sort of blasterama stuff. And as for the plot? Well, it sees you as the pilot of an Earth fighter ship entering Delta space on a mission to locate a missing merchant vessel. All nice and peaceful so far but oh no! The vicious Hsiffan Khanate soon spring to the attack!

What else can we say? Well, actually, there's a fairly interesting story about how the



Delta Charge! has much of the same look as some of those classic old arcade games – small, simple sprites, not many colours, but (cross fingers) complex and challenging attack formations that more than make up for it.



Yikes! Part of the Hsiffan Khanate defence force seems to be a series of solid blocks left floating in space which you're meant to bump into. (Devious stuff.)

Spectrum version of this game came to be. You see, Jason McGann (the chap who wrote it) was so fond of *Delta*, an ancient Thalamus C64 game, that he decided to come up with a Spectrum version off his own bat. Many months of beavering away in his bedroom later he got the thing sufficiently finished to take and show the company, who were so impressed with his dedication (or something) that they felt it deserved a release! So here it is! Oh, and the name change came about because Jason took a number of liberties with the basic plot and graphics, meaning that it wasn't exactly the same game, but more a sort of tribute to it.

The price is going to be £9.99 for the cassette version, with the release date sometime in April – which should be around the time you're reading this. Hopefully we'll have a review lined for the next ish so keep those eyes peeled.


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